No. 18 JAN. 11, 1913 5 CENTS

NICK CARTER STORIES

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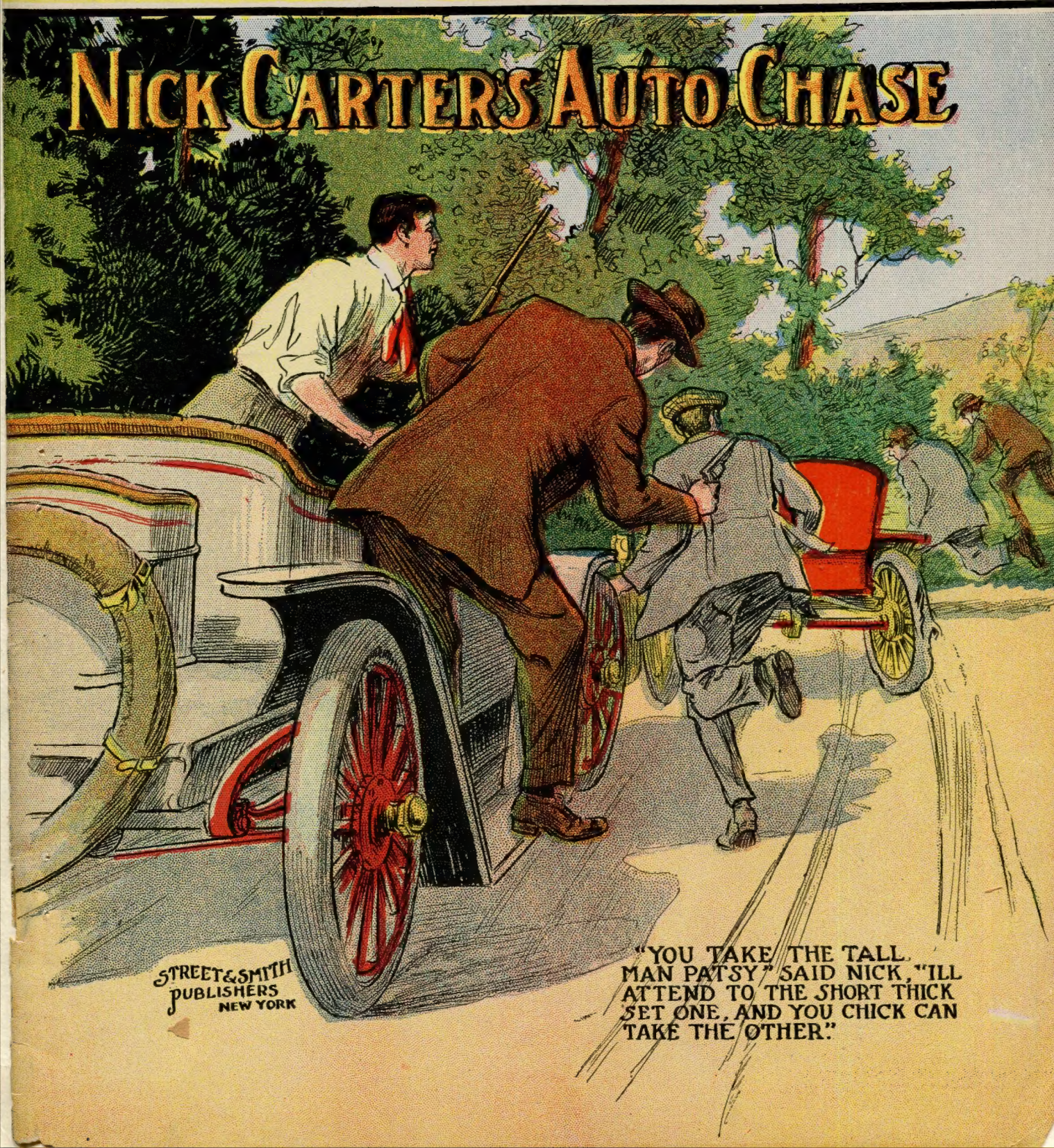
NICK CARTER'S AUTO CHASE
STREET & SMITH PUBLISHERS NEW YORK
"YOU TAKE THE TALL MAN PATSY" SAID NICK, "I'LL ATTEND TO THE SHORT THICK SET ONE, AND YOU CHICK CAN TAKE THE OTHER."

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Inside front cover

NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*

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Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

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No. 18. NEW YORK, January 11, 1913. **Price Five Cents.**

NICK CARTER'S AUTO CHASE;

Or, TRAILING THE "RED SPIDER."

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

YEGGMEN AT WORK.

"Help! For Heaven's sake do something for me! Call an ambulance, somebody!"

This cry for assistance was not loud; on the contrary, it was given in a feeble and agonized tone, but it reached the ears of the night watchman of the People's National Bank.

The bank occupied the first floor of a corner building. There were two floors above, divided into rooms and used as offices by lawyers and real-estate men.

In front of the building was a lamp-post, and next to the lamp-post was an upright bearing a boxlike contrivance containing a massive gong.

This gong was connected electrically with the bank vaults, and was supposed to sound an alarm if the vaults were tampered with in any way.

It was one o'clock in the morning, and the watchman was making his hourly round of the premises when the voice from outside struck on his ears.

Halting at one of the front windows, the watchman peered through into the ring of yellow light thrown by the street lamp.

Clinging to the lamp-post was a man in a frock coat and silk hat—well dressed, as the watchman could plainly see.

Nor was he intoxicated, although he wavered from side to side and had all he could do to hold himself in an upright position.

It was evident that there was something serious the matter with him, and the watchman pressed his face close to the window and craned his neck to look up and down the street.

There was absolutely no one in sight who might go to the unfortunate man's assistance.

It was against the watchman's orders to leave the bank for even a minute, but he was a kind-hearted person and hated to see a fellow being in distress and never raise a finger to help.

While the watchman stood there, the well-dressed individual gave vent to a hollow groan, slipped from the lamp-post, and fell prone to the walk.

That was more than the watchman could stand, and the next instant he had unlocked and unbolted the massive bank door and hurried across the walk.

"Who are you?" he demanded, kneeling beside the man. "What is the matter?"

The man tried to talk, but his voice was no more than a faint whisper.

The watchman bent his ear to the man's lips, and then, in a flash, the supposedly sick man's hands shot upward and gripped the watchman about the throat.

Simultaneously with this movement, a figure darted

out of a hallway to the right of the bank, sandbag in hand.

A blow on the head settled the watchman, who pitched along the walk and lay silent and still.

"Into the bank with him, quick!" hissed the well-dressed individual, and the watchman was picked up, head and heels, and hustled back into the room which he had so recently quitted.

The door was again locked and bolted.

"Not a second too soon," went on the well-dressed man. "Down! Here comes the outside watchman."

The two villains sank out of sight beneath the window.

A slow step was heard outside as some one rounded the corner; then a pencil of light from a bull's-eye lantern shot into the bank through the window.

The ray swept aimlessly around, vanished, and the steps were heard once more, dying away in the distance.

"It will be two hours before that cove comes around again," muttered the man who had used the sandbag.

"In two hours, then, we have got to have this job over and be away from here," returned the other. "Where's Cricket?"

"On the watch halfway down the main street."

"And Five Points?"

"He's watching at the rear of the bank on the cross street."

"Good! You know about the wires of that burglar alarm, Spark?"

"Sure."

"Then go below and break the connection."

"I'll be back in five minutes, Clancy."

Spark vanished in the dusky regions at the rear of the bank, and Clancy dropped down beside the watchman.

From his pocket he took a gag and fixed it about the watchman's jaws; then, with two pieces of rope, he tied his prisoner hand and foot and dragged him out of sight under a customer's desk that stood near the window.

After that he passed through the cashier's cage and halted in front of the vault door.

There was a dimly burning light in front of the vault, and above the iron door there was a clock.

"A time clock," said Spark, coming up at that moment.

"Did you fix the alarm?" queried Clancy, in a sharp tone.

"Broke the battery that operates it."

"Then out with the tools."

Clancy threw off his frock coat, folded it carefully, and laid it on an office stool. On top of his coat he placed his silk hat.

Meanwhile, Spark had produced the "tools"—and peculiar tools they were.

They consisted of a rubber bag, a bar of brown soap, a coil of fuse, and some caps.

Each man knew just what work he was to perform, and went about it without a word.

Breaking the bar of soap in two, Clancy handed one piece to Spark and they set to work plastering up the crack at the edge of the vault door.

This was skillfully and quickly accomplished.

From the top of another office stool Clancy fashioned a cup of the soap on the upper crack.

The bag contained nitroglycerin, and Spark handed it to Clancy, and Clancy poured some of the nitroglycerin into the cup.

Then, crouching under one of the counters, they waited while the explosive oozed downward about the vault door on the inside.

"Give me the fuse," said Clancy, emerging from under the counter when a sufficient period had elapsed.

Again he mounted the stool, fitted a cap to the end of the fuse, placed the cap in the cup, and applied a match.

Both retreated for a short distance.

Presently there came a muffled explosion, resulting in the bursting open of the vault door.

The alarm was silent, proving that Spark had done his work well.

For several moments, however, neither of the robbers made a move—simply crouched where they were, and listened intently.

There was no sound outside, so it was evident that the explosion had aroused no one.

"Now for the second door," said Clancy.

The second door was treated in exactly the same manner as the first, and within an hour from the time the night watchman had left the bank to succor the distressed individual on the sidewalk, the funds of the People's National lay at the mercy of the yeggmen.

From his pockets Spark brought out a number of canvas bags.

While these bags were being filled a shout came from the rear of the bank, followed by two revolver shots—the two reports sounding almost as one.

"The devil!" exclaimed Clancy.

"It's Five Points," breathed Spark, in a sharp undertone.

Both men hurried to the front door and stood there, revolvers in hand.

Quick steps were heard on the walk, and a face was pressed against the glass in the upper part of one of the doors.

"Cricket!" exclaimed Clancy, and hastily admitted the newcomer. "What is it?" he added.

"The outside watchman discovered Five Points, and they had a wrestle and an exchange of shots," said Cricket.

"How's the watchman?"

"Laid out cold, I take it."

A muffled oath fell from Clancy's lips.

"And Five Points?" he went on.

"He's got it bad."

"Able to get away?"

"Just about. He's already started."

"Lay hold of the plunder, you two, and we'll make a get-away ourselves."

Spark and Cricket hurried into the vault, and Clancy followed as far as the stool in the cashier's cage.

There he halted and calmly got into his coat and put on his hat, all the time watching the door and listening intently.

The other two emerged from the vault, staggering under the weight of the bags.

Clancy took one of the bags, and the three walked out of the bank, fading away into the night like ill-omened wraiths.

It was six o'clock the following morning when a patrolman heard a groan coming from the alleyway in the rear of the bank.

Stepping in to investigate, he was horrified to find the outside watchman lying in a pool of blood.

The wounded man was barely able to speak. He told gaspingly of the ill luck that had befallen him, and added that he believed the bank had been robbed.

Running to the nearest patrol box, the officer summoned an ambulance, after which he hurried to the bank.

He found and released the inside watchman, heard his story, and immediately got in some lively work with the telephone.

The chief of police was notified, and also the president of the bank.

The latter, in turn, called up the cashier and as many of the directors as he could reach by phone.

By eight o'clock there was a gathering of police and bank officials about the wrecked doors of the plundered vault, the cashier and an assistant being inside checking up.

At eight-thirty the cashier came out of the vault with a white face.

"They got little for all their pains," he said, loud enough for the police officials and a couple of reporters to overhear. "Only about five thousand dollars all told."

A look of relief overspread the faces of the president and the two directors who were present.

The next moment the president, directors, and the cashier stepped into the president's private office.

There the cashier acknowledged that he had made a misstatement.

"Instead of taking five thousand dollars, the thieves had decamped with seventy-five thousand dollars."

"We're a comparatively small institution," said the president slowly, after a brief interval of silence, "and this loss will spell ruin for us unless——" He hesitated.

"Unless what?" asked one of the directors huskily, mopping the sweat from his forehead.

"Unless we can recover the money before it is generally known that the cashier made a willful misstatement."

"The police of this town can never do it," asserted the other director.

"Shall we go down in our pockets and pay out a good big fee to a man who might be able to save us?" inquired the president.

"It may be throwing good money after bad," said the first director, shaking his head.

"Nevertheless," said the second director, "I move that we try it, anyhow."

"Shall I go ahead?" asked the president.

"Yes," came from both directors and the cashier.

Ten minutes later the following telegram was speeding over the wires:

"NICHOLAS CARTER, New York City: Bank robbery here. Will you name your own fee and take the case?

"JULIUS HEPNER."

"He won't come," said Clarkson, one of the directors. "He has all he can attend to right in New York."

But Clarkson was wrong, for the following answer came from the great detective within two hours after the president had wired:

"JULIUS HEPNER, Latimer, Vermont: Coming on first train. Keep hands off until I get there.

"NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER II.

A HOT STARTER.

The bank robbery took place during the night of Monday and the early hours of Tuesday morning.

On Wednesday morning, at seven o'clock, a neatly dressed man, wearing a pair of very respectable dundrearies, made his appearance at the Memorial Hospital, in Latimer.

"What can I do for you, sir?" inquired the assistant superintendent, who was in charge at that early hour.

"Albert Gardner, the watchman who was shot during the bank robbery, was brought here, was he not?"

"Yes."

"I would like to speak with him a moment."

"I am very sorry, sir, but he died an hour ago."

"Ah! He left an ante-mortem statement?"

"He did."

"And it is now in the hands of the police department?"

"Yes."

"Thank you."

In half an hour the stranger had called at police headquarters, had introduced himself, and had been cordially welcomed.

At his request the statement made out by Gardner was brought out for inspection.

It had nothing whatever to say about the robbery, but nevertheless it had an indirect value.

Some time between two and three o'clock in the morning, so ran the statement, Gardner was rounding the block, trying doors as he went.

When opposite the entrance to the alley in the rear of the bank he heard a sound that aroused his attention, and he started into the alley, flashing his bull's-eye ahead of him as he proceeded.

He had not taken more than twenty or thirty steps when he was set upon, and, for a moment, roughly handled.

Finally he succeeded in drawing his revolver, but just as he was about to pull trigger, his antagonist fired a shot.

This deflected Gardner's aim, for he was hit in the breast. However, he fired and was certain he wounded his man.

Then he lost consciousness, and had come to himself but a few moment's before being found by the patrolman.

He could give no description of the man, for the bull's-eye lantern was knocked to the ground and smashed at the time the watchman was set upon, and thereafter the struggle had been continued in the dark.

"Not much to be learned from this, chief," said Nick.

"The whole affair is the blackest kind of a mystery," declared the chief. "The robbers left not the slightest clew behind."

"You've been going over the ground pretty thoroughly?"

"Up to noon, yesterday. Then I got orders to wait for you."

"How big a town is this?"

"About twenty thousand."

"Have you brought in any suspicious characters?"

"Six or seven."

"I'd like to have a look at them. If New York crooks pulled off this graft I may be able to recognize one of the suspects."

The prisoners were brought in.

They were all of the hobo variety, and their faces were unfamiliar to Carter.

"Better let them go," said Nick; "they're not concerned."

The chief was surprised.

"What makes you think they're not concerned in the robbery?" he asked.

"Not one of the seven knows enough. If hobos did this job, they are of a different caliber from those you have run in. And, last but not least, they'd have different hands."

"Different hands?" echoed the amazed officer.

Nick nodded.

"A tramp who uses an ax or a bucksaw to earn a meal has a palm entirely unlike a cracksman."

"But you didn't look at their hands!"

"Yes, I did," smiled Nick. "Now, if you please, I would like to see the patrolman who found Gardner."

"You seem pretty well posted, Mr. Carter."

"I read the newspapers pretty carefully."

The patrolman was brought in, but the interview with him developed nothing of importance.

From police headquarters the detective went to the home of Alonzo Burton, the bank watchman.

Burton had his head bandaged, and was lying on a lounge in his little front parlor.

The air of the room was impregnated with a smell of arnica, and a buxom young woman was moving about the place, waiting upon the sufferer.

Burton told of the ruse by which he had been lured out upon the sidewalk, but he could give only a general and indefinite description of the man in the frock coat and silk hat, and could give no description whatever of the man's companion.

Like the other watchman, Burton had been knocked insensible very early in the game.

"They are old hands," thought Nick, as he went away from the watchman's house. "Too bad that I am twenty-four hours late in reaching the scene. It is a serious handicap."

He was bound for the bank now, and in approaching the bank building he came from the rear.

Halting at the alley, he looked in.

"Twenty or thirty paces," he mused, recalling the statement made by Gardner.

He counted off twenty paces and then saw, a few feet in front of him, on the right side of the alley, evidences of the struggle that had taken place there.

The feet of many persons had trodden about and over the spot, but the evidences had not been entirely obliterated.

The building on the right was a one-story structure, occupied by a grocery.

At the rear was a heap of empty boxes, and close to one of these boxes a dark stain of blood marked the place where the watchman had lain.

Nick searched the vicinity carefully.

The outlook for evidence was unpromising, but he knew very well that appearances were not always to be trusted.

In a quarter of an hour he had gone over the ground thoroughly, and under the edge of one of the boxes he had found a square card.

It was made of fine, heavy Bristol board, and was the general shape of a visiting card such as a man might use. On the side which had undoubtedly borne the name and address were two oblong blurs showing where a knife

had scraped out the names and numbers, and on its reverse the card bore a stain of blood and these words, in pencil:

"Quarter to Twelve, Mechlin, Gotham."

"Here's something, at all events," thought Nick.

He placed the card carefully in his pocketbook; then, with a final look at the spot where Gardner had had his life-and-death struggle, he started slowly and thoughtfully out of the alley and toward the front of the bank.

Before he reached the bank entrance he came to a sudden halt.

"By Jove!" he muttered.

He did not go into the bank at that moment, but hastened past the entrance and turned in at a telegraph office farther down the street.

There he wrote out and sent the following "rush" message, the contents being in cipher:

"CHICKERING CARTER, New York: Investigate number eleven forty-five Mechlin Street immediately. Send Patsy along by first train. NICK."

"A hot starter," thought the detective. "Now to interview the president of the bank and take a look at the plundered vault."

CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERIOUS BULLET.

It was ten o'clock when Nick Carter walked into the People's National Bank, halted at the cashier's window, and asked for Mr. Hepner.

The cashier knew all the customers of the institution, and the sight of a strange face prompted him to put a question on a matter that was uppermost in his mind.

"Are you Mr. ——?"

"Yes," interrupted the detective. "I am Mr. Nicholas, the man you are looking for."

The cashier gave a start and looked at Nick blankly for a moment.

Then his face cleared.

"Ah, yes," he smiled. "I understand. I will go in and tell Mr. Hepner you are here, Mr. Nicholas."

"Just a moment. I would like a look at the vault before I talk with Mr. Hepner."

"Very well, sir."

The cashier opened the door of the cage, and Nick stepped in, throwing a critical glance about him as he walked to the wrecked doors of the strong room.

Brown soap lay thick on the edges of both doors.

He passed inside the steel chamber, the cashier accompanying him.

"Made a pretty clean sweep, did they?" Nick asked, looking keenly around at the evidence of pillage.

"They seemed to know just what they wanted, Mr. Car—er, Mr. Nicholas."

"That's a way they have—sometimes. Did they make off with any specie?"

"Both specie and bills."

"I see. Now I believe I will talk with Mr. Hepner."

The cashier took the detective to the president's door and announced him.

"When did you get in, Mr. Carter?" asked the president, after greeting his caller.

"I would prefer to have you allude to me as Nicholas, Mr. Hepner. Cut out the Carter for the present."

"All right, Mr. Nicholas. When did you reach town?"

"Last night."

"I have been looking for you to call for two hours or more."

"I was too busy to call before. Just how much more than five thousand dollars did the thieves make away with, Mr. Hepner?"

The president flashed a quick glance into the detective's face.

"What leads you to believe that they got any more than that amount?" he asked.

"Several things. You would not have wired me to take this case on my own terms for a mere bagatelle of five thousand dollars."

"Possibly not."

"And yeggmen with the experience of those who made this haul are not running the risk for so small a figure. They timed their operations so as to catch the vault with plenty of the ready inside."

"A simple case of deduction, by George!" exclaimed Hepner. "The reporter for the papers here, however, believed the cashier's statement as to the amount of our losses."

"A reporter is not a detective, although occasionally a reporter will do good work. Generally, though, they do more harm than good. How much are you out, Mr. Hepner?"

"About seventy-five thousand. Twenty thousand was turned in here on a demand certificate of deposit, at almost closing time, Monday."

Nick brought his eyes suddenly in line with the president's.

"Did you see the man?"

"Yes; I was at the cashier's desk at the time."

"Please describe him."

"Short, thickset, and prosperous looking, as a man would naturally be who had that amount of money."

"What name did he give?"

"Leonard Martin."

"How did he impress you, Mr. Hepner?"

"He impressed me as being a Westerner. He had an easy, independent way with him, and when he talked he used a vernacular only to be found beyond the Missouri."

"He was a stranger in town, you think?"

"I don't think anything about it—I know. He is one of a party of four who are touring New England in a motor car."

"Still in town?"

"Yes, and liable to be here for a few days, I guess."

"Why do you guess that?"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the president suddenly. "It can't be possible you suspect this man of—of——"

The president paused.

"It is immaterial to you whom I suspect, Mr. Hepner," said Nick coolly, "so long as I run down the thieves."

"Of course, of course! But you're far afield, Mr. Nicholas, if that is the point you are driving at."

"Which is your opinion," commented Nick. "What makes you think that Mr. Leonard Martin and his party are liable to be in Latimer for a few days?"

"Because their chauffeur is sick, and the *Red Spider* cannot proceed without a man to run it."

"The auto is called the *Red Spider?*"

"Yes."

"Where is Mr. Martin staying?"

"At the Central House."

"He feared to have so much money with him, and left it here for safe-keeping, I suppose?"

"That's it. A very breezy, genial gentleman he is, too, Mr. Nicholas. I assure you of that."

"Breezy enough, I dare say," returned Nick carelessly, as he rose to take his departure.

"If I can aid you in any way, Mr. Nicholas," said the president, rising to accompany the detective to the door, "do not fail to call on me. As for your bill——"

"You can consider the bill when I turn it in," answered Nick. "There is only one way in which you can help me, Mr. Hepner."

"How is that?"

"I presume there are a good many motor cars in this town?"

"Quite a number. I haven't one myself, but Clarkson, one of our directors, has a very swift machine."

"If I need that machine will Mr. Clarkson let me have it?"

"Certainly. He will go with you himself and operate it for you."

"I will operate it, and will stand responsible for any damage I may do. I would like to have the machine held in readiness for instant use."

"Where are you staying, Mr. Carter?"

"I registered at the Holland Hotel."

"Then I will have Clarkson send the machine to the Holland Hotel garage, subject to your order."

"I would prefer that you have the car sent to the Central House garage, Mr. Hepner. I think of changing my location."

"Very good. It will be some time, I suppose, before we can hope for any results?"

"Perhaps not so very long," answered Nick, who then bid Mr. Hepner good morning and left the bank.

Going at once to the Holland Hotel, he paid his bill, took his grip, and had himself driven to the Central House.

"James Nicholas, Montpelier, Vermont," was the way he inscribed himself on the register.

Turning away, he lighted a cigar and threw himself into a chair by one of the office windows.

The Central House, in point of location, was anything but "central."

It was situated on the outskirts of the city, in a neighborhood at once quiet and exclusive.

For fifteen minutes or more Nick sat in the comfortable armchair, smoking and thinking.

He was sifting the evidence so far secured and wondering what Chick's investigation would lead to, if anything.

Presently the bell boy came up to him and touched him on the shoulder.

"Mr. Nicholas," said he, "you are wanted at the telephone."

"Where is it?" asked Nick, getting up.

"This way, sir."

The detective was conducted to the rear of the office, some distance back of the counter.

The telephone box was under the stairway, side by side with a ground-glass window overlooking a court.

So close was the side of the box to the window that the glass in the box and in the window were scarcely more than a foot apart.

The receiver was lying on the top of the phone, and Nick took it down and held it to his ear.

"Is this Carter?" called a voice.

"Who is this?" queried Nick.

"Call me the Man from Montana. You're Nicholas Carter?"

"My name is Nicholas——"

"By thunder, you can't fool me, Mr. Sleuth!"

"What do you want?" asked the detective.

"Simply wanted to get you into the telephone box. Right here is where you connect with your finish, and you——"

The words were lost in a sharp report and a crashing of glass.

Nick felt a sharp pain in his shoulder, and, as he reeled backward and dropped the receiver, he heard a mocking and triumphant laugh come over the wire.

"Great heavens!" he cried; "I'm shot—killed!"

The next instant he burst out of the telephone box and fell into the arms of the chief of police, the latter having arrived at the hotel but a moment before.

CHAPTER IV.

WARM WORK.

"Great guns!" exclaimed the chief. "What has happened, Mr. ——"

"Call me Nicholas," hissed Nick, clinging to the chief and with lips close to his ear. "I'm shot!" he cried again. "Some one fired into the telephone box from the court. Help me to my room! Send for a doctor—quick!"

There was a great commotion in the hotel office.

The clerk, the porters, and the bell boys came running to the scene, inquiring excitedly about the shooting.

The chief turned Nick over to two of the porters, and he was carried upstairs to his room and laid on the bed.

At every step of the upward journey the detective cried out in pain.

One of the bell boys rushed away for the house physician.

The porters lingered in Nick's room, and so did the clerk who had accompanied them.

"Don't stay in the room, so many of you," moaned Nick, "my nerves are all on edge. Where's the doctor? Isn't he coming?"

The clerk motioned to the porters, who at once withdrew.

"The doctor will be here in a minute—ah, here he is now!"

The doctor entered hurriedly, hatless, and with his medicine case under his arm.

"What in Sam Hill is the matter?" he cried. "Man shot, right in the hotel, in broad daylight? Outrageous! Unheard of!"

"It's a fact, nevertheless," murmered Nick, "and I've got it good. Leave me alone with the doctor, please," he added, turning to the clerk.

The clerk went away, closing the door softly behind him.

Then Nick sat up on the edge of the bed, a half smile on his face.

"Why—why, what are you doing that for?" queried the astounded doctor.

"Sh-h-h!" whispered Nick. "The wound is nothing—it simply grazed my shoulder. A piece of court-plaster is all it needs. If you have that with you, doctor, you can fix me all right in a jiffy."

"You acted as though you were half killed," grumbled the doctor.

"That's all right," Nick went on, in a low tone. "I'm a detective, and I want it to appear as though I have received a bad wound and may be laid up for a month. Are you willing to help out the cause of justice by creating such an impression?"

"I don't understand——"

"Of course you don't, and it isn't necessary that you should. I want you to come here about every three hours and pretend to have seen a patient. That's easy enough, isn't it? Here's a twenty to pay you in advance of your services."

"All right," answered the physician, taking the money. "Now let me see the shoulder."

Nick divested himself of coat and vest and opened his shirt at the neck.

The wound was only a slight one, as the detective had said, and the doctor quickly attended to it and prepared to leave.

"Mind," warned Nick, "you think I may be laid up for some time."

"All right," laughed the doctor. "You detectives are queer fish."

"We have to be," answered Nick, stretching himself out on the bed again.

The chief came in just as the doctor went out.

"How do you find him, doc?" the chief asked anxiously.

"Serious," was the answer; "he may be laid up for a month."

The doctor went away, and the chief came up to the side of the bed.

"This is blamed tough, Nicholas!" he exclaimed.

"Lock the door," said Nick.

The chief was surprised at the strength of the detective's voice.

When the chief locked the door he turned around and found the detective sitting up.

"Say," muttered the officer, "what in blazes does all this mean?"

"It means that I am faking," replied Nick.

"Faking?"

"That's it. I wasn't badly wounded, only scatched."

"Who could have done it. What was the motive?"

"The motive was to put me on the retired list. Can't you imagine who would want to do that?"

"The bank robbers!"

"Exactly. They have discovered that I am at work on the case, and they have tried to take time by the forelock and for me. It isn't the first time such a thing has happened, but it is the first time a telephone was ever used as a trap. That was rather clever."

"I'm over my head, Nicholas; I can't get next to you."

"It was a put-up job to get me out of the way, chief. I was called into the telephone box by a man who told me I could call him the Man from Montana. This fellow acknowledged that he had lured me there for the purpose of having me shot. That much he told me, and then his confederate in the court blazed away."

"The audacity of it!" exclaimed the amazed officer.

"More proof that these bank robbers are old hands. Did you look around the court?"

"Yes, but I couldn't find a trace of any one who might have committed the outrage."

"I hardly expected that you would. It was well planned."

"But why did you act as though you were half killed?"

"Because I want these scoundrels to think that their murderous plan succeeded. If they believe that I am out of the way, it's the biggest kind of a trump in my hand."

"By Jupiter, that's a fact! You've got a head on you, and no mistake. Why, you weren't more than half a second in evolving the plan, were you?"

"Not much longer, chief. The point that now confronts us is this: This farce will have to be carried through to a finish. While I am working outside, the general impression must be that I am laid up in this room."

"We can work that, all right."

"I think so. The doctor already has his instructions. If you will put one of your trusty plain-clothes men next to the scheme, and send him here as a sort of nurse, I believe the plan can be carried through without any trouble."

"I'll arrange it."

"Then there's another thing for you to do."

"What's that?"

"Send a man to the central telephone office and see if he can find out where that phone call for me came from.

"Let the man go to the place from which I was rung up, and, if possible, get a description of the fellow who sent in the call."

"I'll do it. It's a great game you are playing, Mr. Carter."

"I'm playing for big stakes. But don't call me Carter; Nicholas will do for the present."

"I'll remember. What are you going to do in the meantime?"

"Lie here in bed until I hear what sort of a report your man makes about the fellow who called me up."

"Will you stay here alone?"

"You can send one of the bell boys to be with me until your man comes."

"All right." The chief got up to go. "I'm surprised to learn that those bank robbers are still in town."

"I'm not. This town is probably as safe for them as any other part of the country. Hurry that fly cop over here, chief. I have warm work ahead of me and don't want to be out of the running any longer than necessary."

"Trust me to hustle things," replied the chief, and he took his departure.

Presently the bell boy came up and found Nick stretched out on the bed.

The boy was a quiet little chap, and brought Nick a pitcher of water, and a daily paper, and did a number of other things to make him comfortable.

The detective was reading the paper when the plain-clothes man presented himself.

"I was sent over here to take care of you," said the policeman.

He accompanied his words with a wink by way of informing the detective that he knew what was expected of him.

"Thank you," said Nick. "What name?"

"Jerome."

"Well, Mr. Jerome, may I trouble you to take a dollar out of my vest pocket and give it to this boy?"

The vest and coat were hanging over a chair, and Jerome secured the dollar and handed it to the boy.

As soon as the boy was gone, the detective sprang from the bed.

"You know your duties, do you, Jerome?"

"I'm going to pretend I've got you here whether you're here or not," grinned the fly cop.

"That's it; and you're also to pretend that I'm a mighty sick man."

"I'll play the part O. K., sir. Don't worry about that."

"I don't worry about much of anything, Jerome. It's a waste of energy."

"You don't believe in crossing bridges before you get to 'em, then?"

"That depends on the bridge. What is the town of Latimer saying about an attempted murder, in broad daylight, in a hotel like this?"

"People are talking less about that than they are about the ease with which the man who perpetrated the outrage managed to slip away."

While Nick was talking with the policeman he was changing his make-up.

Presently he stood forth a younger man than "Nicholas" by some twenty years.

The spreading dundrearies were gone, and a black mustache ornamented his upper lip.

His clothes were different, and he was utterly unlike "Nicholas" in manner as well as appearance.

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Jerome. "You're a great hand at that sort of thing, Mr. Nicholas."

"Charlie Gordon now," corrected Nick.

"Mr. Gordon, then," grinned the officer.

A rap fell on the door.

Nick motioned to Jerome to answer the summons.

The caller proved to be the chief, and he was at once admitted.

He looked at Nick in surprise and then cast a quick look at the bed.

"Well, you'll pass," he said, as the truth dawned on him.

"What's new?" asked the detective.

"I called to report on that telephone matter."

"Good! The man you sent out must have been a live one to get back with a report as soon as this."

"I attended to it myself."

"Much obliged, chief. Did you experience any difficulty?"

"None at all. At central they told me that the call came from a pay station in a drug store.

"I got the number of the drug store and found that it is less than a block from here.

"At about the time you received your call one of the clerks in the store remembered seeing a short, thickset man——"

"Short and thickset, eh?" interposed Nick.

"Yes, and with red hair and a full red beard. This man went into the box. When he came out he did so in a hurry and lost no time in getting out of the store and away."

"That's A-one, chief."

"Have you a theory?"

"Regarding the bank robbers?"

"Yes."

"I'm full of theories. I shall want your help in a few

minutes. Will you wait here until I come back? I can promise you that I won't be gone long."

"I'll wait."

Thereupon Nick let himself quietly out of the room and descended the stairs to the lower hall.

Passing through the hall into the street, he reëntered the hotel by the office doors.

Going to the counter, he drew the register in front of him and began looking it over, until he finally found what he wanted, which was the following, written in an easy and flowing hand:

"Leonard Martin, Chicago."

This entry had been made on the preceding Saturday, and Nick saw that Leonard Martin had been assigned to room thirteen.

Directly following this signature were three names, as follows:

"Leslie Hibbard, Morris Markham, and Emil Z. Schiffel," all hailing from the same place that claimed Mr. Martin.

But there were check marks opposite the names of these three guests showing that they had balanced their accounts and left.

"May I see the letters and telegrams?" Nick asked.

The clerk handed over a bundle, and the detective proceeded to look at them.

There was a letter for Mr. Leonard Martin, bearing a Chicago postmark; also a telegram for James Nicholas.

Nick slipped the telegram into his pocket, unnoticed by the clerk, and passed out through the doors again.

This time he reversed his tactics, reëntered by the hall, and made his way to his room on the second floor.

He read his telegram, which was from Chick, and ran thus:

"Look out for a man with a mole on his right cheek, short, thickset, named Clancy. Will come with Patsy. Important that I should see you."

"This short, thickset man is making himself pretty numerous," thought Nick, putting the telegram away in his grip.

"What I want you to do, chief," said Nick, approaching the officer, "is to wire the Chicago chief of police and ask for immediate information about a man named Leonard Martin. If the Chicago people know such a man, I'd like to learn his present whereabouts."

"I'll send the dispatch at once," said the chief.

"Have the answer left with Jerome when it comes."

"Very well."

The chief left the room and passed down the stairs.

Nick went out, a few moments afterward, but did not descend to the first floor.

On the contrary, he made his way along the hall to room thirteen.

There was no one else in the passage, and he paused at the door and listened intently.

All was quiet inside, and, stooping, he peered through the keyhole.

The key was not in the lock, on the inside, so it seemed fairly certain that Mr. Martin was out.

With a final swift glance up and down the passage, Nick drew a skeleton key from his pocket and quickly opened the door.

To step inside and softly reclose the door was the work of only a moment.

The room was exactly like the usual hotel chamber. There were two doors opening to right and left, so that, if desired, the apartment could be used en suite with others adjoining.

On the bed lay an open satchel, its contents very much disarranged, showing that the owner left it in a hurry.

Nick went over to the bed and looked down at the contents of the grip.

The first object to catch his eye was a red wig with a false beard of the same color attached.

This interested him mightily.

There was a fat wallet in the satchel, and——

Just at that point the detective, steel-nerved though he was, experienced something like a shock.

A dresser stood at the end of the room at right angles with the foot of the bed, and out of the corners of his eyes Nick caught a glimpse of the glass, and in it was reflected the figure of a man.

The man had opened the door leading off to the left and was standing just within it, coolly eying the detective.

Furthermore, this man was short and thickset, and there was a black mole on his right cheek. Not only that, but he had a revolver in his hand and was pointing it at the intruder.

In a flash Nick had made up his mind as to what he should do, for this man, of all others, must not take him for a prying detective. It would be better for him to consider Nick as a common sneak thief.

So the Little Giant set about to foster the latter impression, and, picking up the wallet, he slipped it into his coat pocket.

Then he began throwing the other contents of the grip aside in a seeming eagerness to find something else of value.

"There, my man, that'll do!"

The voice came from the man in the doorway, and Nick sprang to an about face, the very picture of trepidation and fear.

CHAPTER V.

BEGINNING THE CHASE.

"Don't shoot!" pleaded the detective, cringing before the pointed gun; "for Heaven's sake, don't shoot!"

"What do you mean, you miserable whelp, by sneaking into this room?" demanded the man, making a threatening gesture with the revolver.

Nick thought he recognized the voice.

It sounded strangely like the tone assumed by the Man from Montana through the phone.

"My wife and family are starving," said Nick, in a choking voice; "I can get no work, and they must live."

"Bah! What do I care for your wife and family? You can't ring in a bluff of that kind on me, not on your life. You're a common, ordinary, go-as-you-please sneak thief, and right here is where you are going to get it in the neck!"

The man took a side-step to the left, still holding the gun on Nick, and reached his left hand toward the push button above the speaking tube.

"Oh, don't, sir!" implored Nick, wringing his hands. "Let me go! I beg of you to let me go!"

"Shut up, you coward!" gritted the man. "If you had any nerve about you I might be tempted to cut you loose; but I haven't any sort of use for a sniveling, chicken-hearted coyote like you are showing yourself to be."

His hand rested on the round piece of wood that framed the push button, but he did not ring the bell.

Nick gave vent to a hollow groan, sank to his knees, and covered his face with his hands.

"Look here, you!" growled the man with the gun. "You're pretty well dressed for a man working this sort of graft."

"I've seen better days," sniffled Nick.

"Bother! Better days don't count. It's what you are to-day, not last week, or last year. What do you call yourself?"

"My real name do you want, or the one I have been going by?"

"The one you go by now."

"Chuffer Jones."

The man with the gun gave a start.

"Chuffer!" he exclaimed. "You mean Chauffeur, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why were you called that?"

"Because of my trade, sir."

"You know how to run automobiles?"

"That used to be my business. But I took to drink, sir, and lost job after job. Then I took to this graft."

"What's your record?"

"It's terrible, sir."

"How terrible?"

"Five years in Sing Sing and ten in Stillwater."

A gleam had come into the murky eyes of the man with the gun.

"I suppose you know," said he, "that I could jab this button and have the house detective up here in about two minutes."

"Mercy!" gasped Nick, all but tying himself up in a knot.

"Oh, brace up, brace up!" grunted the other. "Haven't you got any sand at all?"

"How much sand do you expect a man to have when he's caught red-handed, like this?"

"You ought to back your legitimate amount of nerve, no matter what happens. You know, I suppose, that I could send you up for quite a spell for what you have tried to do here this afternoon?"

"In the name of——"

"Will you hush that yaup?" said the man with the gun, exasperated.

"But if you knew——"

"I know you're a sneak thief and that I've got you dead to rights. Savvy? Now, if you want to do the right thing there's a chance for you to square yourself with me."

"What is it?" cried Nick eagerly.

"First, fork over that leather."

The detective "forked" it over.

"Take anything else?"

"Didn't have time."

"Well, young man, my name is Leonard Martin. I'm from Chicago, and I'm touring New England with three friends of mine in a motor car. The machine belongs to me, but I haven't the first notion how to run the thing. One of my friends knows the ropes, but he was taken sick a day or two ago and will be hung up here for quite a spell. Now, if you want to run the car for me——"

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" mumbled Nick, with another contortion.

"You whining fool," growled Mr. Martin testily, "will you shut up?"

"Yes, sir; yes, sir!"

"Then, if you want to save your scalp you can drive the *Red Spider*, as I call the auto, for me."

"All right, sir."

"That is," qualified Martin, "if you can. I'm going to try you right now."

Once more he reached out his left hand, and this time he pressed the bell.

"Order my car around to the office entrance," he called down the tube.

Turning away from the wall, he again addressed himself to the detective.

"I'm taking you into my employ, Jones," he went on, "but at the first sign of disloyalty I shall turn you over to the police."

"I understand, sir."

"Try to run away from me, and I'll have you hounded down if it costs me every dollar I've got in the world."

Nick shivered.

"And another thing," went on Martin, "you're to let whisky alone. There's a time for lushing, as for everything else, and when I'm ready to have you booze I'll let you know."

"Yes, sir."

"Come on, then. And don't forget that I've got this right here, ready for use."

Martin thrust the six-shooter into his hip pocket with a flourish, and Nick had another shiver.

They passed out into the hall and downstairs to the office, where Martin halted for a word with the clerk.

"How's that man that got shot?"

"Poorly, sir, poorly," replied the clerk.

"Will he be in bed long?"

"He may never leave his bed, Mr. Martin."

"Tough, mighty tough," mused the kind-hearted Mr. Martin, and passed out to his waiting auto.

Nick looked the machine over with a critical eye.

It was an ordinary American-made car, but looked as though it might be able to work up considerable speed.

It was painted red and had the squat, sprawled-out appearance of the ill-omened thing after which it was named.

Nick Carter could drive any kind of a car, and so could Chick.

Martin climbed into the machine and Nick followed.

"Now, then," said Martin, "let her go!"

Nick started off in fine style, guiding the broad-tired wheels on a hair line.

"You'll do," said Martin approvingly. "I think you can run the *Spider* better than Emil ever dared to. Keep along this road right on out into the suburbs. I'll tell you when I want to stop."

They reeled off three or four miles before Nick got the order to halt.

The stop was made in front of a two-story brick house.

"I'll get out here and you can wait for me," said Martin. "Better light the lamps, for it will be pretty dark when we start back."

Martin got out and went up the steps and into the house, and Nick lighted the lamps and settled himself back in the seat as comfortably as he could.

Presently he became aware that a roughly dressed man, with his hands in his trousers pockets, was sizing up the machine through the semigloom.

"What's one ov them there dinguses wuth?" the man inquired.

"More than you'll ever salt away," answered Nick.

"I want tew knaow! Naow, mister, ef yeou'll jist tell me——"

Nick started up suddenly in his seat and swept a quick glance around.

"You're taking a big risk, chief!" he muttered.

"Got an answer to that Chicago telegram and had to see you," the chief replied.

"Do you often tog up like that?"

"Not often; that's something I leave to my understrappers. But in this instance, as only Jerome and I know your make-up, and Jerome can't be spared, I decided to help you out."

"How did you know I was here?"

"Saw you come out of the hotel and followed along on a bike that stood at the curb."

"Bully for you, chief!" exclaimed Nick. "That answer from Chicago got around in short order."

"It had the right of way, and they must have known all about this Leonard Martin at headquarters."

"What of him?"

"The Chicago chief says that he's one of the shining lights of the bar, in that place, and that some time ago he started to tour New England in his auto, the *Red Spider,* with three friends. The party, at this time, is believed to be somewhere in Vermont."

"That all?"

"Isn't it enough?"

"I think so," returned Nick musingly.

He was "up a stump," so to speak.

Something was wrong, for this Chicago information did not gibe with his own deductions—and he was ready to bank on his deductions.

"What in Sam Hill are you running that machine for?" queried the curious chief.

"Following out a theory," returned Nick. Then he suddenly aroused himself. "We may be watched from the house," said he, "and you hadn't ought to hang around long."

"I'm ready to go now."

"Wait. I'm expecting two of my assistants from New York—Chick and Patsy. It's ten to one that I'll be bowling along through the country in this machine before many hours have passed, and I want Chick and Patsy to follow in another auto."

"Where'll they get the auto?"

"There's one subject to my order in the Central House garage—a machine belonging to Mr. Clarkson, one of the directors of the People's National Bank."

"I know the machine well. Clarkson has been hauled up half a dozen times for exceeding the speed limit."

"Well, that's the machine I want Chick and Patsy to follow with."

"How will your assistants keep track of you?"

"Trust them for that."

"But if the *Red Spider* pulls out before they get here what——"

"It won't. I'll see that it doesn't."

Nick had not got quite through with the chief, but was obliged to break off his talk at that moment, for there came the sound of a closing door from the brick house, and Martin appeared and came down the steps to the sidewalk.

The chief did not attempt to run, but stood his ground.

"Hosses aire good enough fer me, by gosh!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't give ye twenty-five cents fer a dozen o' them there machines."

Martin paid no attention to the supposed "hayseed," beyond flashing a curious look at him as he climbed into the auto.

"Back to the hotel, Jones," said Martin.

"We're going to pull out of here to-night," observed Martin.

"Which way do we travel?"

"Never you mind which way we travel!" was the sharp response. "All you got to do is to work the levers and steer where I tell you to."

"Certainly, sir."

"We'll take the *Red Spider* to the garage," went on Martin, "and then we'll go to the hotel."

"Where'll I put up?" asked Nick

"You remember the room next to the one where you were operating this afternoon."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it's empty, and you can occupy that. You're not going to get out of my sight while we're in town."

Nick did not fancy this arrangement, but there was nothing else for him to do except to proceed as Martin directed.

As they swung into the garage they saw another auto standing near the door.

"Whose machine is that?" asked Martin.

"It belongs to Mr. Clarkson," replied one of the men connected with the garage.

It was an electric car—a fact which Nick was glad to observe, for being an electric it was practically noiseless.

The *Red Spider,* on the other hand, had a gasoline motor and pounded along in a way that would make it heard at some distance.

Chick and Patsy would thus have the advantage in the chase; they could hear the *Spider* fanning along, but those on the *Spider* would not be able to hear them.

On leaving the garage, Martin and Nick went upstairs to the former's rooms.

Nick was shown into the room on the left.

This room had a door opening upon the hall, and Martin locked it and put the key in his pocket.

Then he ordered the detective to hand over the skeleton key which had been of such good service several hours before.

Thinking that he now had his chauffeur just where he wanted him, Martin went into the other chamber and threw himself down on the bed with his clothes on.

Martin need not have worried about Nick taking "French leave."

The detective was only too glad to be in the society of the supposed Chicago men, and would not leave until he had satisfied himself on one or two points.

It was five o'clock in the morning when Nick was summoned to get up and make ready for the start.

They did not stop for breakfast, for Martin said they would get something to eat at a town a little farther on.

As they passed through the office, Nick saw a man seated in a chair and apparently sound asleep.

The man was Chick; and he was not as sound asleep as he seemed to be.

Martin paid his bill, and he and Nick walked out to the *Red Spider,* which stood at the curb.

Nick cast a casual glance through the window near

which Chick had been sitting, and saw the chair he had occupied was empty.

There were two men in the tonneau seat of the automobile; men who had faces of the recognized criminal type.

Martin climbed into the machine and Nick followed, the two men on the rear seat eying him sharply.

"Start east and take the first turn to the left," ordered Martin, "then follow that road right out of town and into the country."

Nick put the car in motion, and as he turned the corner he caught a glimpse of Clarkson's machine just rounding the hotel from the direction of the garage.

Chick and Patsy were in the car, and Chick was doing the driving.

CHAPTER VI.

OVER THE BRIDGE.

Each man in the touring party carried a large satchel, and Nick noticed that they took very good care of them, never letting them get out of their hands for an instant.

The satchels appeared to be rather heavy, and once, when one of them dropped to the bottom of the auto, the detective heard a jingle.

The morning was bright, the air was fresh, and for five miles the *Red Spider* cut along at a smart clip.

"Show me how to operate the thing," said Martin, and Nick instructed him in the art.

"How long have you had this machine, Mr. Martin?" Nick asked.

A silence followed the question, during which Martin exchanged looks with the men on the rear seat.

"Close onto two years," said Martin finally. "What do you want to know for?"

"It seems strange that you haven't learned something about running the *Red Spider* in two years."

Martin leaned forward and rapped Nick on the shoulder.

"Look here, Jones," he growled, "don't you get too blamed inquisitive. It's liable to strike in and carry you off."

After that Nick held his peace for a time, but there were a whole lot of things he wanted to know, and he wasn't long in starting talking again.

"Chicago is a great town," he remarked.

"Bet your life!" exclaimed Martin.

"I used to do janitor work in the Guggenheimer Building," confided Nick.

"Is that so?"

"Sure. You know anything about Chicago?"

"Well, rather. I've lived there about all my life."

"Then you know the Guggenheimer Building, corner State and Madison Streets?"

"Like a book. Been in it more times than I can count."

The detective wanted to laugh, for there was no such building in Chicago.

"Do you remember the orang-utan carved out of marble that they've got over the door of the Guggenheimer Building?" Nick went on.

"You bet. Seen it a hundred times."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Nick. "It seems like meeting old friends to run across a man who remembers that orang-utan."

At the end of the five miles there was a little town called Herkimer, and here the party stopped for breakfast.

When they got down from the machine and went into the hotel they took their satchels with them.

Nick finished his meal and returned to the *Red Spider* several minutes before the rest of the party left the table.

The detective knew very well that Chick and Patsy wouldn't bring their machine up to the place while the *Red Spider* was in evidence, but he wanted some assurance that his assistants were following.

He soon got what he wanted, for Patsy appeared in the road, back at a point where it made a turn in the woods, and gave his hat a wave.

Patsy then disappeared, and Nick felt much easier in his mind.

"It's a cinch," thought Nick, "that not one of this outfit of supposed Chicago men knows anything about Chicago.

"And, another thing, Martin never had the *Red Spider* for two years or he'd know how to run it.

"But what did the Chicago chief of police mean by that message he sent to the police department in Latimer?"

Nick was exceedingly thoughtful for a few moments.

"I'd like to pinch the entire outfit and make them prove that they're what they say they are," he said to himself finally, and gave a look down the road as though he would summon Chick and Patsy.

But Chick and Patsy were not in sight.

If Nick could have known what Martin and his two friends were talking about in the hotel, however, it is safe to assume that he would have made the effort of his life to arrest the three men before they had gone another mile farther.

"I don't like the looks of that driver of yours, Clancy," one of Martin's pals was saying.

"He's all right, I tell you, Spark," averred Clancy. "Didn't I spot him while trying to sneak a wallet in my room? I've got the fellow right under my thumb, and he knows it."

"He looks to me as though he's playing a part. Don't you think so, Cricket?"

"He looks all right to me," replied Cricket.

"We ought to get rid of him," persisted Spark.

"What's got you on the run, old man?" queried Clancy.

"Give it up; but I've got a feeling that there's trouble ahead. And, look here—I'll bet I can prove to you that this Jones, as he calls himself, is crooked."

"If you can do that, Spark," said Clancy, "we'll salt him too quick."

"Can you run the *Spider* now, Clancy?"

"Well enough to take us where we want to go. But come on, if you're through. It's time we hit the trail."

They got up, picked up their satchels from beside their chairs, and went out and got into the auto.

"Keep right on along the turnpike, Jones, just as we were going before we stopped," said Martin.

Nick carried out his orders, and they were soon spinning along in a due north direction.

"Did you have any trouble in connecting with the twenty thousand, Clancy?" asked Cricket.

Clancy!

The word was out of Cricket's mouth before he fairly realized that he had said it.

Savage looks were darted at him by Clancy and Spark, and then all three fixed their eyes upon Nick.

Apparently he had not heard the word.

"No trouble at all," said Clancy.

"It was easy money," went on Cricket, "and earned you a hundred per cent overnight."

Nick knew that Clancy and Cricket were talking about the demand certificate for twenty thousand dollars which the former had got from the People's National Bank on Monday afternoon.

Here was proof that the money had been deposited, stolen back, and collected again on the demand certificate.

The detective was more than ready, now, to take chances in capturing the three scoundrels. Some parts of the deal were still dark to him, but he was sure of his ground so far as Clancy and his two pals were concerned.

But how were the men to be captured?

With two at his back and one beside him, to attempt to make an arrest single-handed would have been the height of folly.

A startling expedient occurred to Nick.

Why not wreck the machine?

That would give Chick and Patsy a chance to come up and take a hand in the capture.

Nick looked ahead, and saw the turnpike wound around through the hills, and was bordered with large trees.

Some of these trees stood out close to the roadway, and it would be a comparatively easy matter to speed up the auto and smash against a tree.

The collision would certainly wreck the *Red Spider,* and it might also cause the gasoline tank to explode.

In the latter event it was a question whether any of the party would be left alive to tell the tale.

Nick had no desire to cut short his career on that lonely turnpike in northern Vermont, but still he realized that he would have to take chances, no matter what course he pursued.

In the distance he could see a plank bridge crossing a stream. The edge of the bridge was guarded with a low wooden railing, and to run the *Red Spider* into the railing and off the bridge would not be a difficult task. But that would be infinitely more dangerous than running the auto into a tree.

Nick, therefore, decided on a collision.

The approach to the bridge was slightly downhill, and he started the *Spider* at a tremendous clip.

"Slower, slower!" shouted Clancy. "Do you want to wreck us?"

"It's out of control!" cried Nick. "I can't do anything with it!"

The *Spider* was shooting toward a tree, a hundred feet ahead, and Nick seemed to be working frantically at the levers in an attempt to stop it.

Suddenly Spark, who sat directly behind Nick, thrust a hand in his pocket and slipped his fingers through a set of brass knuckles.

Bringing the hand out of his pocket, Spark half arose and dealt the detective a smashing blow on the back of the head, and Nick fell forward, stunned and helpless.

"He was shamming!" cried Spark; "quick, Clancy! Turn the machine or we're gone!"

Clancy flung himself on the steering wheel and swerved the auto so that it missed the tree by a hair's breadth, and in another moment he had halted the machine.

"He was trying to do for us," said Spark, excitedly.

"But why in the fiend's name should he try to wreck us?" answered Clancy. "He would have done for himself, as well."

"He had some game, I tell you," persisted Spark. "He must be one of Nick Carter's men. He wants revenge for what you and I did to Carter, Clancy."

"Bosh! Your nerves are running away with you, Spark."

"Look here!"

Spark leaned over Nick and tore the false mustache from his lip.

"Now what do you think? This sneak thief of yours, Clancy, has been in disguise!"

Clancy voiced a lurid oath.

"I wish I knew Carter's assistants," he added, with a fierce growl; "but I don't even know Carter himself, except from description."

"Are you sure we got Carter at the hotel?" queried Cricket.

"Nicholas is the name he uses, now and then, and we know he took that bank robbery case. You followed him from the Holland Hotel to the Central House, Cricket, and ought to know him if anybody does."

"Nicholas was disguised," said Cricket, "and I couldn't tell what he looked like with the disguise off. But he didn't look anything like this fellow."

"This chap is trying to plug our game, anyhow," said Clancy, a savage gleam in his eyes, "and right here is our chance to get rid of him. Bring out a couple of ropes, Cricket."

Cricket fumbled around in the bottom of the auto and finally found a piece of rope, which he cut in two.

Nick was still unconscious, and did not recover his wits until the tying operation had been completed.

When he opened his eyes, Clancy was going through his pockets.

"Guns, and handcuffs, and a pocket bull's-eye," muttered Clancy, producing the articles one by one and handing them over the back of the front seat to Spark and Cricket. "A nice equipment for a sneak thief to tote around with him. He's Nick Carter's assistant, all right."

"He has two men assistants," spoke up Spark: "Chick and Patsy."

"I have heard of them," said Clancy, with an oath. "Here, you!" he added, grabbing Nick by the shoulders and giving him a rough shake; "what sort of a deal were you trying to ring in on us?"

"Who hit me?" demanded Nick.

"I did," asserted Spark. "What did you try to wreck the auto for?"

"I couldn't manage it."

"Bah!" snorted Clancy. "You're one of Nick Carter's men, we know that, and right here is where our trails divide. I'm from Montana, I am, and Terhune, a man Nick Carter hounded into the penitentiary, was a pal of mine.

"I swore, when Terhune was brought back to Montana from New York and sent over the road, that I'd never rest until I had played even with Carter on Terhune's account.

"I have pretty near succeeded in doing that, I reckon. Cricket shadowed Carter from the Holland Hotel to the Central House and reported to Spark and me. Then I put up that job and called up Carter on the phone. Spark was beside the glazed window in the court, and he

fired the shot that put this crack detective of yours out of the chase after these bank robbers.

"I didn't count on having such good luck as to connect with one of Carter's assistants; and now that we've got you, Jones, or whatever your name is, we'll see that you're properly taken care of."

"You may be able to take care of me," said the detective; "but you'll still have Nick Carter to settle with."

"Carter!" sneered Clancy. "Why, he ain't in it with me when it comes down to headwork. I can think all around him any day in the week."

"You're thinking all around him now," answered Nick quietly.

"What do you mean by that?"

"You'll know some time."

"Quit this fooling!" cried Spark. "Let's get rid of the fool and then push on toward the Canadian line. I won't feel easy till we cross the border."

That was Nick's first clew to the intentions of Clancy and his pals. They were working to get into Canada.

"How'll we fix him?" asked Clancy.

"A gun is good enough," said Cricket.

"A knife is better," supplemented Spark. "It makes less noise."

"What do we care for noise?" asked Clancy, with a harsh laugh; "there is no one within a mile of us. But I know a trick worth two of either one of those."

"What is it?" inquired Spark.

"We'll give him a chance to swim without the use of his hands or feet."

"That's the talk!" declared Cricket.

"Make for the bridge," added Spark, "and we'll toss him over."

Clancy ran the *Red Spider* to the foot of the hill and on the bridge, halting close to the right-hand railing.

Then he and Spark stood up; Nick was caught by the feet and shoulders and swung back and forth.

"One, two, three," counted Clancy; "now, then!"

The form of the detective was released, and went whirling outward and downward.

"Help!" he cried, at the top of his voice; "the river!" Then he splashed into the water and went plunging away in the swift current.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE WAY TO STOP AN AUTO.

Nick's cry for help and his reference to the river were intended for the ears of Chick and Patsy.

If they failed him, Nick felt that his case was hopeless.

The stream into which he was thrown was narrow and winding, and, at that point, flowed with great force.

The swiftness of the current bore the detective up and kept him from sinking.

The men in the *Red Spider* watched until he was carried around a bend in the stream and then continued on, confident that they had been completely successful in their murderous designs.

The torrent was full of drift, and Nick, half strangled and dizzy, felt that his chief danger lay in being struck by some of the logs that were spinning along with him on the surface of the water.

But this fact, so far from being a danger, proved his salvation, for an uprooted tree came sweeping toward him, and he was caught in the spreading branches.

Tangled among the limbs, as he ultimately became, it was impossible for him to sink, and for a short distance he rode along with his head out of the torrent.

Presently the tree lodged in a jam of driftwood and Nick watched the whirling débris shoot against the jam and pass on, missing his head, sometimes, by no more than an inch.

"Help!" he called again. "This way, Chick! Patsy! Help!"

He did not call in vain, for Chick and Patsy suddenly appeared on the bank, the former with a coil of rope in his hands.

"We'll have you in a minute, Nick," cried Chick cheerily. "I'll throw the rope and you can catch it."

"No, I can't," answered Nick. "My hands are tied."

"Here," said Patsy, grabbing one end of the rope and tying it about his waist. "I can go out on that tree and fish him out of the branches. I'm a regular cat when it comes to walking a log."

"All right, Patsy," said Chick. "Mind your eye and be careful that the tree doesn't turn with you."

Patsy started, made his way into the branches, knelt down, and cut the rope from Nick's hands.

Nick was then able to help, and his rescue was not long in being effected.

On reaching the bank he dropped down for a moment completely exhausted.

"Wouldn't this give you a jolt?" muttered Patsy, as he cut the rope from Nick's ankles. "They expected him to swim with his hands and feet tied."

"They expected me to go to the bottom," said Nick, getting to his feet, "and I'd have done it, too, if you and Chick hadn't been handy by."

"We haven't any time to waste here," he went on, giving himself a shake and throwing as much water as he could out of his soaked clothing. "Where's the auto?"

"On the turnpike, about a hundred yards away," replied Chick.

"Then let's get to it and keep on after that outfit. They're making for the Canadian line, and we've got to stop them before they get across."

"Then we'll have to rush," said Chick. "The border isn't more than twenty miles away."

They all realized the value of the minutes that were slipping past, and ran for the turnpike, sprang into the auto, and started on at top speed.

After they had crossed the bridge and got some distance beyond, they began to look and listen for some sign of the *Spider*, but they could hear nothing.

"Give her every ounce of power," cried Nick, and Chick turned on the current full.

"We'll overhaul 'em," averred Chick, "providing something doesn't give way."

"And providing we're on the right track," added Nick; "they may have scented trouble and turned off the main road."

"We'll soon find out. Who are they?"

"They are the men who robbed the bank at Latimer Monday night. One of them is short, thickset, and has a mole on his right cheek——"

"Clancy!" cried Chick.

"If we get near enough," put in Patsy, lifting a repeating rifle from the bottom of the auto, "we can stop them with this."

"Where did you get that?" asked Nick.

"The proprietor of the garage in Latimer had it, and

I borrowed it. There's more range to this than there is to a six-shooter."

Again they listened, and a worried look overspread Nick's face when they failed to hear the pounding of the gasolene auto.

"There hasn't been a road, so far, that they could turn off on," said Chick, "so it's a safe-money guess that we're behind them."

"At this rate we ought to come up with them before long," returned Nick. "What did you find at eleven forty-five Mechlin Street, Chick?"

"It was Mechlin Avenue."

"That's immaterial. You found the place?"

"Like a top."

"What sort of a place is it?"

"A tough boarding house, run by a hag who has a son called Five Points."

"Well?"

"I went to the hang-out in a tough disguise, and had no difficulty in getting lodging. I thought I might have to stay a day or two, but a couple of hours was enough."

"What did you learn?"

"Lots; and it was hot stuff, too."

Again they listened and looked for the *Red Spider,* but in vain.

Nor had they yet passed any crossroad, so they felt sure their men must still be ahead of them.

"Go on, Chick," said Nick.

"The hag that bossed the roost was having a confab with a brother of hers in the sitting room of the place.

"The brother was as clear a case of grafter as I ever saw—he had all the marks from soles to headpiece.

"It seems that he was out for the stuff and wanted to join a gang where there would be something doing.

"The old woman was putting him next to a touch of the warm variety, and, say! I heard enough to land them both in the Tombs.

"The hag was telling about her son, Five Points, and how he had connected with a Montana man who was working a graft that was as novel as it was successful.

"The old woman, you see, thought that her brother might be able to join the same gang, and he was dead anxious to make the attempt.

"From what the hag said it appears that there were four in Clancy's party: Clancy himself, Five Points, a man called Spark, and another known as Cricket.

"They came together at some place in Vermont and captured an auto car belonging to some Chicago people who were doing the New England States.

"Clancy, it seems, had had his eye on this party for some time.

"He is a gambler and appears to have plenty of money, so that he could have bought his own machine if he had wanted to, but that wasn't his object.

"He lays for the *Red Spider,* makes prisoners of the Chicago men, and tucks them away somewhere in the Vermont woods where they will be safe; then he and his outfit gets into the Chicago man's clothes, and go piking around the circle as Leonard Martin, Leslie Hibbard, Morris Markham, and Emil Z. Schiffel——"

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Nick, as the whole graft dawned on him. "That was a clever game, for no one could ever suspect these rich Chicago men of looting a bank, or doing any other crooked work."

"Clancy has a good head for that kind of business."

"The old woman was well informed, it seems to me."

"She got her information through Five Points, I suppose, who knows something about driving an automobile."

"Why did you wire me to look out for Clancy?"

"The old woman described Clancy to her brother, so that he would know him at sight. She also mentioned that he was a pal of Terhune's, and had come East with a double purpose: to clear up as much good money as he could, and, incidentally, to settle for Nick Carter."

"He's tried it twice," said Nick, "and——"

"Listen!" broke in Patsy. "That other auto is dead ahead. Can't you hear it?"

They could hear it plainly, the chug, chug, chug coming to their ears with great distinctness.

"Now, then," muttered Nick, "if this machine holds together we'll be up with them in a very few minutes. Let me have one of your revolvers, Patsy."

"Take 'em both," said Patsy, tendering the weapons; "I'll use the rifle."

"Better let me take the rifle," returned Nick, a sudden idea coming to him.

"All right."

Patsy handed over the gun.

The next instant the auto rounded a hill and the *Red Spider* came into sight.

It was some distance off and racing at a speed which caused it to lurch dangerously from side to side.

"A stern chase is usually a long one, but I don't think this will be," muttered Nick. "We're gaining at every jump."

"And they don't know, yet, that we're after them," chuckled Patsy.

"They know now," said Chick. "One of them on the rear set is turning around. There! He's trying a shot."

The report of a revolver echoed out, but the range was too great for effective shooting with small arms.

"Give 'em the Winchester, Nick!" suggested Patsy.

"I will," replied Nick, "and I'll cripple the *Spider* so we can overhaul it in less time than ever."

He threw the repeater to his shoulder and sighted it long and carefully.

It was a pretty shot that he intended making, for not only must he take into consideration the motion of his own auto, but that of the *Red Spider,* as well.

Suddenly he pulled the trigger.

A loud report volleyed out, and instantly the *Spider* began to wabble, and the speed of the gasoline machine was reduced at least one-half.

"By thunder!" exulted Patsy; "he's punctured one of the rear tires!"

CHAPTER VIII.

PATSY'S CAPTURE.

"We'll be on them in a minute," said Nick. "Got an extra pair of handcuffs, Patsy?"

"Sure," and Patsy dove into his pocket and brought out a pair of bracelets.

"I was pretty well stripped by Clancy and his gang before they threw me in the river," went on Nick.

"We'll get your property back in short order, Nick," said Chick.

"We'll have a fight, first. By George, they're jumping from the automobile and taking to the woods!"

"They're going to make a run of it, the cowards!" exclaimed Patsy.

"You take the tall man, Patsy," said Nick. "I'll attend to the short, thickset individual, and you, Chick, can take the other."

"All right," came from Chick and Patsy.

Presently the high-power electric auto was alongside the *Red Spider,* and the detectives leaped into the road and started for the woods.

At the edge of the timber a volley was fired at them, the bullets whistling through the air uncomfortably close.

The fire of the robbers was returned as the detectives leaped forward.

In a few moments they caught sight of Clancy and his pals. They were separating and making in different directions.

"Here's where we divide," said Nick. "Remember, we've got to have those men before they get across the line."

"They're ours!" said Chick.

"Easy!" added Patsy.

Patsy's man was Cricket, and the way Patsy sprinted after him was a sight to see and remember.

Through the woods, pell-mell, raced the grafter and the detective, leaping over logs, plunging through bushes, and halting now and again to try a shot at each other.

None of the bullets took effect, and both Patsy and Cricket had soon used up their ammunition.

"It will be a give-and-take with our mitts, now," thought Patsy, "and it's a mighty good thing that I'm the best runner. Hello! There's a farmhouse, and Mr. Grafter is making right for it."

There was a clearing in the woods, and Cricket leaped a fence and made for the farm buildings.

At first he headed toward the house, but a sight of the farmer, and his wife, and a crowd of children, with a hired man and a bulldog in the background, caused him to change his mind.

Swerving to the right, he pushed for the barn.

"Hi, there!" cried Patsy. "He's a thief! Head him off! Stop him!"

Instead of trying to head off the fleeing robber, however, the farmer and his family retreated into the house at a double quick.

"Hurry, Hiram!" cried the woman frantically. "They're tramps, and we'll all be killed; I know we will!"

"Don't you fret, Mirandy!" whooped the farmer. "I'll take care of you."

Then the door was slammed shut, effectually debarring the entrance of the hired man.

"Le'me in!" bellowed the hired man, banging at the door with his clenched fists. "Gosh all hemlocks, d'ye want me tew git killed?"

"You don't amount to nothin', Willyum," called the farmer from behind the door; "they won't kill you. Set Tige on 'em!"

The hired man whirled and loped toward the barn, but seeing Patsy making in that direction, William sidetracked into a corncrib.

At any other time the ludicrous side of this situation would have appealed to Patsy, but just now he had his hands too full to considering it.

Cricket had run into the barn, and the detective sprang to the door through which he had vanished.

Just as Patsy reached the barn the bulldog, Tige, became a factor in the case.

The dog was not so easily scared as the farmer and the rest of his household, and didn't care particularly who he tackled just so long as he tackled somebody.

It happened that he came up with Patsy as the latter was about to leap into the barn, caught him by the tails of his coat, and pulled him backward.

The instant Patsy recoiled, a pitchfork cleaved the air in the exact place his head had been an instant before.

The detective grabbed the fork, wrenched it out of Cricket's hands, and turned.

"Good dog!" cried Patsy. "But that's enough of it," and he brought the handle of the fork around with terrific force.

Tige was a bulldog, but he was sensible and realized when he had enough.

He was knocked end over end, and when he picked himself up he raced for the corncrib and tried to get inside with the hired man.

As Patsy once more leaped to get into the barn and try conclusions with Cricket, a currycomb caught him in the shoulder.

"Never touched me!" shouted Patsy.

The next instant he and Cricket were having it rough and tumble on the barn floor.

Patsy had strength and science and was not long in placing the robber in chancery.

"That'll do," said Cricket; "you're too many for me."

"Where are your guns?" demanded Patsy.

"Dropped 'em," panted Cricket. "They wasn't any good anyhow."

"Got a knife?"

"No."

"You're another!"

Patsy thrust his hand into the breast of the robber's coat and pulled out a knife in a leather sheath.

After transferring the blade to his own pocket, he brought out a pair of handcuffs and attached them to his prisoner's wrists.

"Now, get up," he said, hanging onto the bracelets.

Cricket arose.

"Who are you?" he inquired.

"One of Nick Carter's men," grinned Patsy. "I should think you'd know the brand by this time."

"The best thing we've done this trip is to fix Carter," gloated Cricket.

"You starred yourself at that, didn't you?" returned the detective dryly.

"You bet we did! Who was that duffer that ran your auto?"

"Chickering Carter, the Little Giant's right-hand man."

"And that cove in the water-soaked garments and minus the hat? You pulled him out of the river, didn't you?"

"Oh, no. He swam out and walked up the bank."

"But his hands and feet were tied!"

"That's no trick at all for Nick Carter."

Cricket gave a jump.

"Nick Carter!" he gasped. "Was that man Nick Carter?"

"Sure. Who did you think he was?"

Cricket muttered an oath.

"There's no use in a lot of pinheads like us going up against Nick Carter," he said. "When that sleuth enters a race it's all over but paying the bets."

"You're a pretty sensible kind of a grafter, after all," said Patsy. "If you're done chinning, we'll move—out of the barn and toward the house."

Cricket started and Patsy walked at his side, still keeping a grip on the handcuffs.

The hired man and the dog were just crawling out of the corncrib, and the farmer had mustered up enough courage to open the door of the house a couple of inches as the detective passed by with his prisoner.

A feeble plot darted through Cricket's mind.

"I say," he shouted, "this man is a highway robber, and he chased me here. Go for him, will you? Help me get away from him!"

"Yeou be derned," drawled the farmer. "A feller that 'u'd scare honest folks like yeou did ought tew be robbed."

"Got anything else you want to tell 'em?" queried Patsy.

Cricket gave a black scowl and turned away.

"Then it's us back to the auto," went on the detective, and marched his prisoner back through the woods to the road.

The two machines were standing side by side, as they had been left, and there was no one near them.

"It looks as though I'd made a record for bringing in the first man," remarked Patsy. "Hello! What's that?"

A thump of swiftly falling hoofs reached him, and a team and a lumber wagon came slashing into view around a wooded bend.

The horses attached to the wagon were running away. The lines were dragging on the ground; there was no one on the bounding seat, and the awkward vehicle leaped and buckjumped like a thing of life.

In the rear of the wagon box were two men, struggling with each other for the mastery.

One of them was Chick and the other was Spark.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW CHICK GOT HIS MAN.

Spark was not so good a runner as Cricket, and Chick would have made a capture much quicker than Patsy had done had his man not doubled back to the road, and, fortunately for him, encountered a young woman in a gingham dress and sunbonnet driving home from town.

"Stop!" cried Spark. "Take me in—I want to ride with you!"

"Not much you don't!" returned the young woman, with a toss of her head. "I can pick my own comp'ny, thanks!"

"Will you stop?"

Spark displayed his revolver.

That was too much for the girl.

With a scream she let go the lines and dropped over the wagon wheel to the opposite side of the road.

As she fell out Spark jumped in.

"Go it, you skates!" roared the robber, grabbing up the whip and lashing the horses right and left.

The lines were on the ground, but Spark did not care for that.

The faster the horses ran away, the better he would be suited.

Anything to get him out of the vicinity of Chick.

Chick, however, was not to be shaken off so easily.

He reached the road at the precise moment Spark began lashing the team, and, by some quick work, succeeded in grabbing the end of the wagon as it flew past.

In a twinkling Chick was jerked off his feet and flung in the air, but he did not release his hold.

His muscular arms alone dragged him into the wagon box.

The team was now tearing down the turnpike at a furious run, and Spark, balancing himself unsteadily, turned to see what had become of his pursuer.

Chick was in the box and crawling toward him.

Jumping over the wagon seat, Spark hurled himself upon the detective, the latter rising to meet the attack.

That is the position they were in when the wagon dashed around the bend and past the two automobiles.

Chick was far and away a better man than Spark, but skill and muscle could not count in a predicament of that kind.

Finally the two men went down on the floor of the wagon.

The end gate had already been lost, so the combatants rolled over and over and finally tumbled into the road.

This terminated the struggle.

Spark gave vent to a groan of pain, and relaxed his hold on the detective, and the latter got up, clasping his left wrist with his right hand.

Patsy, leading his prisoner by the irons, came to the scene as rapidly as he could.

"What's the matter, Chick?" he asked.

"Sprained my left wrist, that's all," answered Chick. "It hurts like the deuce, but it's nothing serious."

While speaking, Chick was tying a handkerchief tightly around the injured wrist, using his right hand and his teeth.

"Your man seems to have got touched up pretty bad," went on Patsy.

"He has only himself to blame, if he has. He thought he could get away from me by using that wagon, but I guess he thinks differently now."

Chick stepped up to Spark and bent over him.

"Where are you hurt?" he asked.

"My right leg," groaned the robber; "it's broken!"

"I don't wonder at it. That was quite a jolt we had."

The detective made a brief examination and found the leg to be broken.

"We can't do anything for you for a while," said Chick, helping himself to Spark's weapons. "Just as soon as Nick comes in with the leader of your push, though, we'll take the back track and get you under the doctor's care as soon as possible."

"Nick who?" asked Spark faintly.

"Nick Carter."

"Was that man we threw into the creek Nick Carter?" Spark demanded, forgetting his pain for the moment.

"Who did you think it was?"

Spark voiced some lurid language, then added:

"If we had dreamed that fellow was the prize package himself, we'd have put a bullet into him before we gave him his bath."

"Even then he would have beat you out," put in Patsy. "The grafter doesn't live that can do up Nick Carter."

Between them, Chick and Patsy succeeded in getting Spark into the tonneau of the *Red Spider*.

He was in great pain, and it was not thought necessary to put the irons on him.

When they had made Spark as comfortable as possible, the detectives became aware that the young woman was standing beside them, in the road.

"I want my wagon an' team," she said aggressively, as she caught Chick's eye.

"All right," said Chick cheerfully. "I think you'll find the team at home when you get there."

"Maybe I'll find the team, but I'll bet the wagon is strung all along the road," the girl answered. "You'll have to pay me damages."

"This is the fellow who will have to stand the damage," said Chick, indicating Spark.

"What's his name, an' where does he put up?"

"That's too much for me."

"Well," said the girl, with a snap of her jaws, "they've lynched people in this country for doin' less than he done."

With that she marched off and never turned a backward look.

Chick laughed a little, although he admitted to himself that it was pretty hard luck.

"Here, Patsy," he said, "run after her and give her this twenty. That will soothe her feelings, I guess."

Patsy chased after the girl and gave her the money.

"She was tickled to death," he said, when he got back; "the old rattletrap wasn't worth any more than the scrap iron that was in it; so it was bargain day for her, all right. I wonder what's keeping Nick?"

"Clancy'll kill him," spoke up Cricket.

"Don't you believe it," returned Patsy.

"While we're waiting," said Chick, "we'll get things in shape for the return trip."

He was look at the rear right-hand tire, which hung to the wheel as flabby as a rag.

"Nick made a dead-center shot," said Patsy.

"It's a bad puncture, and I doubt if we can repair it."

"You don't have to repair it," put in Spark, who was thinking of getting to a doctor in the shortest possible time. "There's an emergency tire under the front seat. Use that."

Chick brought out the tire, and also a force pump.

The machine was then "jacked up" with a couple of stout fence rails, the old tire taken off and the new one put on and inflated.

Hardly was this bit of work accomplished, when a boy came galloping up on horseback.

He was a red-headed boy, and was laboring under so much excitement that it was all he could do to talk.

"Big fight down to the blacksmith shop!" he finally managed to articulate.

"Who was doing the fighting?" asked Chick.

"Couple o' fellers. Geewhilikins, but yeou never seen anythin' like it!"

"Was either of the men killed?"

"Naw, but one of 'em was purty nigh. I was told tew come here an' have yeou come right daown."

"We'll come," said Chick. Turning to Patsy, he added: "You get in the electric machine with your man, and I'll run this one."

"You bet," returned Patsy.

In less than a minute they were all aboard and ready for the start.

"How far away is the blacksmith shop, my lad?" asked Chick.

"'Baout a mile."

It was a quick run which the two autos made to the blacksmith shop, for both Chick and Patsy were worried over the boy's story.

But they had their worry for nothing, for when they came in sight of the crossroads and the dingy and solitary little shop which stood there, they saw Nick in front, sitting on a keg, smoking and talking with a number of bystanders.

"Where's Clancy, Nick?" asked Chick, bringing the *Red Spider* to a halt.

"Inside, handcuffed to an anvil. It was hard to do anything with him without killing him—and I didn't want to do that."

"Did he make you much trouble?" asked Patsy.

"Some. He's one of that Montana clique, and they never seem to know when they're downed. Clancy is beginning to scent the situation, though, for he hasn't made much noise during the last few minutes. He was a pal of Terhune's, and you remember what a time I had bagging him."

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

Clancy had fought every step of the way through the woods to the blacksmith shop.

Every convenient tree trunk, every rise of ground, and every rock which he encountered in the course of his retreat was taken advantage of and used as temporary breastwork.

The fact that no serious injuries resulted from the shooting proves how wary the men were.

Nick emptied his repeater at about the identical time Clancy emptied his revolvers.

Clancy saw this and gave vent to a mocking laugh.

"It's anybody's fight yet," he yelled.

No longer fearing to show himself, he turned and made straight through the timber, coming out on the road in the vicinity of the blacksmith shop.

Coming upon this blacksmith shop was an entirely unexpected event, but it was one of which Clancy did not fail to take instant advantage.

There was only one man in the shop at the time Clancy made his advent on the scene—one man and the red-headed boy before mentioned.

The boy was having a horse shod, and just before he went to work on the horse the smith had been heating a crowbar for the purpose of repointing it.

That crowbar was still in the fire, one end cool, but the other sizzing hot.

The blacksmith looked up as Clancy burst in.

With a quick blow Clancy knocked him out of the way and looked around for a weapon.

The crowbar was prominently in his view, and he caught it out of the fire.

Nick was in the door as Clancy possessed himself of the bar.

"I'll have you!" roared the Montana man. "My second try at you won't end like the first."

"This is your third attempt on my life, Clancy," returned Nick, springing forward and watching the Westerner warily.

"The third time?" repeated Clancy, resting the red-hot end of the bar for an instant on the anvil.

"My name's Nick Carter, and——"

A torrent of invectives burst from the robber's lips.

"I'll have you now," he yelled. "I'll strike a blow for Terhune as well as for myself!"

He jumped through the door of the shop, whirling the bar about his head in a livid circle.

Straight toward Nick he rushed, shouting his imprecations and vowing that he'd have the detective's life.

Nick waited coolly, the rifle in his hand.

The robber struck at him and Nick parried the blow with the gun, leaped in with the quickness of a cat, and gripped Clancy about the waist, and from that moment the fight was lost to Clancy.

The Little Giant's phenomenal strength quickly made itself felt.

He contracted his arms, the awful, viselike pressure slowly but surely driving the breath from the robber's lungs.

Clancy began to gasp, his eyes distended, and the bar fell from his nerveless hand.

"Stop!" he whispered; "you're killing me!"

Nick bore him into the blacksmith shop and hurled him to the ground.

Clancy struggled to avoid the handcuffs, and Nick, forcing his arms around the anvil, made the wrists fast.

"Now," said the detective, "you can struggle all you please."

The blacksmith was bathing his eye in a tub of water.

"Are you hurt much?" Nick asked.

"Thought for a spell I had been kicked by a mule," answered the smith, wiping his eye on the dingy handkerchief that was tied around his neck. "Sorry I didn't come through in time tew help ye."

"Gee whiz!" cried the red-headed boy, "he didn't need no help. He downed the big feller easier'n anythin' I ever see. Gosh, mister, but yeou're great!"

The youngster looked at Nick with admiring eyes, and the latter brought out a half dollar which he had in his pocket and which had somehow escaped Clancy's search.

"Do you want to earn this, my lad?" Nick asked.

"Can a duck swim?" the boy chirped.

"Then get on that horse and ride up the road. You won't have to go far before you find a couple of automobiles. If there is any one with the machines, say that I want them brought here. Understand?"

"Like a haouse afire!"

"Then catch!"

Nick flipped the coin toward the boy, who grabbed it out of the air and stowed it away in his pocket, and a minute later he was galloping up the road.

Several men, hearing the commotion at the blacksmith shop, had come in from the neighboring fields, and they were standing around, looking from Clancy to Nick and trying to get the true inwardness of the affair from the blacksmith.

"Come outside," said Nick amiably, "and I'll tell you all about it."

And that's what he was doing when Chick and Patsy bore down on him—smoking and enlightening the natives.

A few hurried words of explanation were exchanged by the detectives.

"Are all the grips belonging to the prisoners still in the *Red Spider?*" asked Nick.

"There are three here," said Chick; "they're big ones and heavy as lead."

"It was the heft that kept the grafters from lugging the grips along when they made their break for the timber," put in Patsy.

"Open one of the satchels, Chick," said Nick, "and see what's inside. I'm a little anxious to know."

Nick complied.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, his amazed eyes fixed on the contents of the satchel he had opened.

"Gold, silver, and bank notes?" queried Nick.

"I should say so!"

"It's the bank's money. I'll travel in the *Red Spider* with you, Chick, and Clancy and the man with the broken leg will ride with us. Patsy, you and your man can hum along in the other machine."

It was necessary to rope Clancy's legs before he could be put into the automobile; but he was finally stowed away and all was made ready for the return journey.

Nick, before climbing into the *Spider* beside Clancy, turned to the blacksmith, who was standing near.

"How far is it to the Canadian line, from here?" he asked.

"See that pile o' rocks?" the smith returned, indicating a heap of stones about a hundred feet to the rear of the shop.

"Yes."

"Well, Canady lays on t'other side o' that monniment."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Patsy; "you wasn't very much to the good, Nick, after all."

"It was close, mighty close," added Chick.

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Nick, jumping into the auto. "Let her go, Chick."

* * * * * * *

That evening, at about nine o'clock, the two automobiles drew up in front of police headquarters, in the city of Latimer.

The chief was not in evidence, but he was quickly summoned from home by telephone.

"By Jupiter!" he cried; "you've done it, Carter—done it and with ground to spare."

"A hundred feet of ground," grinned Patsy.

"Are you sure they're the right men?" asked the chief.

"That's the only kind we capture," said Chick.

"I believe you," returned the chief, and shook hands heartily with the New York men and tendered his congratulations.

Cricket and Clancy were taken to their cells, and Spark was conveyed to the Memorial Hospital.

Nick went to the place to which he had taken Clancy in the automobile the night before the start north, and found that, as he surmised, Five Points was there.

Spark and Cricket had also stayed at this boarding house, after the robbery, and when they left a nurse had been hired by Clancy to look after their wounded pal.

Five Points' wound, which was at first not believed to be serious, took a turn for the worse and ultimately caused his death.

Before he died he made a statement, telling how he and Spark and Cricket had joined Clancy, had captured the automobile, and made prisoners of the Chicago men, and had confined them in a house occupied by Cricket's father—a worse criminal than Cricket ever dared to be.

Nick was on the point of proceeding to the place where the Chicago men were imprisoned, and release them, when they saved him the trouble by releasing themselves and coming on to Latimer—the newspapers having informed them that the *Red Spider* was at that point.

Aside from their jarred feelings, the Chicago party was none the worse for its little experience.

The bank's funds were found intact in the satchel,

including the twenty thousand dollars paid over to Clancy on his certificate of deposit.

The ownership of that twenty thousand is still being debated in the courts, with the chances favoring Clancy, whose Montana friends are fighting the case for him.

Clancy, Spark, and Cricket were sent to the penitentiary for life, not on a robbery, but on a murder charge.

And on the day the Chicago men showed up in Latimer the three detectives started back to New York, where important matters were awaiting their attention.

By the capture of "the Montana man," Nick Carter closed his experience with a gang of Western crooks, all of whom had proved desperate to a degree and courageous and clever as they were desperate.

THE END.

"The Corrigan Inheritance; or, Nick Carter's Game of Deduction," is the title of the story that will be found in the next issue of this weekly. The great detective is called upon to recover the huge sum of two millions of dollars in cash which has mysteriously disappeared. The way he goes about it, and the result of his work and genius is graphically narrated, and the thoughts of the reader will not go woolgathering for a single instant during the telling of this absorbing case. It is No. 19, and it will be out January 18th.

UNDER SEAL;

Or, THE HAND OF THE GUILTY.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.

Chief Inspector Watts turned from the telephone occupying a convenient position upon his desk, and, glancing toward the passage making through his stenographer's room to the general clerk's office, called sharply:

"Let me know if Sheridan Keene is about here."

"He is," responded Garratt, from his desk outside.

"Send him in here, please."

The young detective was not long in responding to the chief's summons. Presently a knock upon the door of the latter's private office prefaced his entrance, and the lithe, erect figure of one of the cleverest detectives under the efficient direction of the famous Boston inspector came over the threshold.

"Leave the door open, Keene!" said Chief Watts, looking up when the detective entered. "I expect a gentleman to call here presently."

"Do you wish me to remain here?"

"Yes, I think so," was the reply. "Sit down over here. I have just received a communication from Mr. Markham, one of the local managers of the Surety Express Company, and he now is on his way up here."

"What is wrong down there, chief?" asked Sheridan Keene, taking the seat to the left of the chief's high desk, and laying aside his hat.

"A rather mysterious robbery, as nearly as I could get it over the wire," said Chief Watts, at the same time busily glancing over his voluminous mail of that morning.

"A mysterious robbery?" echoed Keene, in some surprise; for the precautions of this great express company against anything of the nature of a theft are so efficient that a loss is indeed a rare occurrence. "Did Mr. Markham give you any of the particulars, Chief Watts?"

"Not of consequence," was the reply. "I understood that part of the contents of an express package has been stolen. Markham is now coming up here to state the case in detail. I may decide to have you look into it, and you had better hear his statement. Ah, here he is now! Good morning, Mr. Markham."

The gentleman who had entered while Chief Watts was speaking was a portly man in middle life, with that type of countenance indicating both force and ability. He threw open his topcoat as he entered, bowing affably, and at once took the chair to which the chief inspector courteously signed him with a wave of his hand.

"Good morning, Chief Watts," he rejoined; "do I find you very busy?"

"I am always busy, Markham; but never too busy to accept an additional duty for the protection of life and property," laughed the chief, yet his observations were eminently true. "I presume you are acquainted with Detective Sheridan Keene?"

"I know him very well by name," replied Markham, bowing agreeably, and flashing a quick glance at the young detective. "Glad to meet you personally, Mr. Keene."

Sheridan Keene bowed, in his gravely observant way.

"Now, Mr. Markham, what's the trouble down at the Surety Express Company's office?" inquired the chief, pushing aside his mail and swinging around in his chair.

Markham drew either side of his heavy coat higher on his broad chest, and gave his head an emphatic shake.

"There may be no trouble at our office," he replied, with vigorous significance. "As a matter of personal opinion, I am not inclined to think there is. But an incident has occurred which is utterly inexplicable. It completely baffles us. It is one of the most mysterious robberies of which I have heard."

"You interest me, to say the least," smiled Chief Watts. "When was this robbery discovered?"

"About a week ago."

"Why did you not call upon me earlier?"

"Because, Chief Watts, the case is so very peculiar that we could not bring ourselves to believe that it was one of robbery, and we have been personally investigating it, in the hope of clearing it up without official assistance. But we are now knocked out completely, and throw up the sponge."

"And are willing to be gracefully led to your corner," commented Chief Watts, laughing genially. "But, levity aside, Markham, what are the precise facts of the case?"

"I will state them briefly, chief, and as nearly as possible in the order of their occurrence."

"Do so, please."

The portly express manager drew a notebook from an inner pocket of his coat, and, with frequent references thereto, made the following extraordinary statements.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT BECAME OF THE MONEY?

"The parties first involved in this affair," began Markham, "are the firm of Horton & Hague, of this city."

"The dry-goods merchants?"

"Yes, sir. On the fifth of this month, a week ago yesterday, Mr. Hague, the junior member of the firm, called at the Mutual National Bank, where they carry a deposit, and drew a check for twelve thousand dollars against their account. That part of the transaction was all right."

"Go on, sir."

The bank cashier, Mr. Evans, gave Hague the money in notes of large denomination; namely, nine one-thousand dollar bills and six notes of five hundred dollars each."

"Which makes up the twelve thousand dollars," bowed Chief Watts; "I understand."

"Hague received and counted this money," continued Markham; "then handed it to one of the bank clerks, who was with Cashier Evans in the inclosure, and asked him to put it under seal in an envelope and address the package to the senior member of the firm, who was in New York."

"Note the address, Keene, if you please."

Sheridan Keene drew a block of paper under his hand, and took up a pencil.

"Now, Mr. Markham."

"The clerk addressed one of the bank's document envelopes, as requested, to R. J. Horton, in care of Steinforth Brothers, No. —— Broadway, New York. The money, in the meantime, was lying on the counter directly in front of the clerk, and in plain sight of Mr. Hague. Cashier Evans had returned to his private office."

"Go on," nodded the chief; "I follow you."

"The clerk, whose name is Dean, took up the notes, and, before putting them in the envelope, again passed them out of the window to Hague, asking him if he would like to verify the amount once more before they were put under seal. Hague again counted the money, and states that Dean then put it in the envelope as requested, and sealed the flap with wax, stamping with the bank seal seven impressions across the back of the envelope."

"Note all of these details in their order," suggested Chief Watts, to Sheridan Keene.

"I am doing so," was the reply.

"The package having been sealed," continued Markham, "Hague leaned nearer the window, and requested Dean to mark the value of the package five thousand instead of twelve thousand."

"Why did he make such a request as that?" demanded Chief Watts, frowning slightly.

"For the purpose of cheating the Surety Express Company," was the censorious reply. "He wished to send the package by express to New York. Our carrying charges increase with the amount forwarded, and Hague had calculated that he could reduce the express charges a few paltry dollars by deceiving us as to the sum the package contained."

"One moment, please! Does Hague say why he sent the funds by express, rather than by a draft on the New York bank?"

"Yes, he does."

"What are his reasons?"

"He states that Horton was in New York buying goods, in payment for which he wanted cash. Owing to the stringency in the New York money market just then, and the fact that Horton could be spared the trouble of getting a large check converted, Hague decided to send him the funds in cash. And in order to beat the Surety Express Company out of a little more than half its charges, he requested the clerk to mark the package five thousand dollars."

"Very brilliant on his part," commented Chief Watts dryly. "What action did the bank clerk take?"

"Dean demurred somewhat over the curious request, but Hague assured him that there was nothing very great involved in the matter, and Dean finally complied with the request, and marked the package seven thousand dollars short."

"What then?"

"Hague then requested that the package should be sent by one of the bank messengers to the office of the Surety Express Company, which was also done. The way being in his direction, Hague accompanied the messenger, and together they presented the package at the proper counter in our office."

"Yes; go on."

"Our clerk carefully examined the seals and found them to be intact. He immediately gave Mr. Hague a receipt for the package at its face value, and received the express charges for the same amount. On the following morning the package was delivered to R. J. Horton, at the office of Steinfort Brothers, New York. He opened it in the presence of both members of the New York firm, and counted the money."

"Was the amount correct?"

"Quite the contrary," said Mr. Markham, with a vigorous shake of his head. "It was short just seven thousand dollars."

"You don't tell me!"

"That's the fact, Chief Watts!" cried Markham. "Seven of the thousand-dollar bills had been extracted."

"And the package delivered at its face value?"

"Precisely, sir."

"Well, well! That is curious," said Chief Watts. "What happened then?"

"Horton was filled with dismay, of course, and rushed to the nearest telegraph office and wired Hague that the package had been received seven thousand dollars short. As a result, Hague came rushing down to our office with the same story. On looking the matter up, I naturally told him that we had safely delivered a package, said by him to contain only five thousand dollars. And then he came out with the truth, and stated for what reason he had had the package marked wrong."

"It seems to be a case of the biter bitten," said Chief Watts. "As a matter of fact, Markham, the Surety Express Company is not responsible for this loss, is it?"

"I think not. The receipts given by the company are covered by the safe delivery of the five thousand dollars," replied Markham. "But that's neither here nor there, Chief Watts. There is no shadow of a doubt that the seven thousand dollars have been stolen."

"They are missing, you mean."

"What's the difference?"

"We sometimes make a distinct difference between stolen money and money that is missing," said Chief Watts, with odd significance. "Were the seals upon the package intact when Horton opened it, Mr. Markham?"

"Yes, sir," nodded the express manager. "I have the envelope at my office. It was opened by slitting the upper edge, and the seals are still in perfect condition."

"None of them broken?"

"Not even cracked, sir."

"Will you please trace the package from Boston to New York, stating through whose hands it passed, up to the time of delivery?"

"Certainly I will."

"Note them, Keene!"

"The package first came into the hands of our agent, who gave the receipt for it."

"What is his name, Mr. Markham?"

"His name is Roberts."

"Has he been long in your employ?"

"For a dozen years or more?"

"To whom did it go from him?"

"It was passed to the entry clerk, Chief Watts, who lists the money packages on the waybill."

"And what is his name?"

"He is a younger brother of Roberts—a man of about twenty-five years."

"Do both live here in the city?"

"Yes, sir."

"After leaving young Roberts, to whom did it go?"

"To one of our forwarding clerks, a man by the name of Kimball. He placed the package in one of our leather pouches. This pouch is secured with a metal seal. The pouch containing the package was subsequently turned over to one of our delivery clerks, who carried it in a wagon from the office to the car at the Southern Union Station, where it was delivered to the express messenger who runs through to New York."

"Let me have his name also, Mr. Markham."

"His name is Leary. He put the pouch in a safe in the car, which was locked during the journey. On reaching New York he turned the pouch over to one of our delivery clerks, who carried it in a wagon to the company's New York office. It there was received by one of the clerks. The seal upon the pouch was unbroken. Upon breaking the seal and opening the pouch, the clerk found the money package in apparently good order, with the wax seals unbroken and the cover untampered with. He in turn gave it to one of the New York delivery clerks, who took the package to Steinfort Brothers' office, and obtained Mr. Horton's receipt for it. That's the whole story, Chief Watts, as far as tracing the package goes. One question still remains to be answered, however."

"And what is that, Mr. Markham?" the chief asked carelessly.

"Where and how did seven one-thousand-dollar bills disappear from that envelope, in the several hands through which the money package passed?" replied Mr. Markham decisively.

Chief Watts laughed lightly.

"On the face of it," he replied; "that don't seem to be a very easy question to answer."

CHAPTER III.

THE DEDUCTIONS OF CHIEF WATTS.

Mr. Markham did not immediately respond to the observation made by Chief Inspector Watts. He sat back in his chair, his face in a brown study, as if even then, after more than a week of investigation and cudgeling of brains, the mystery involving the loss of the seven thousand dollars was as strange and inexplicable as it had been in the very beginning.

"In the light of all the circumstances, or rather in the darkness of them, for they are dark enough, Heaven knows!" he finally observed, "it appears to be one of the most mysterious robberies on record."

Chief Watts looked up from the brief notes taken down by Sheridan Keene, and bent his grave blue eyes on the manager's face.

"Who has been investigating this affair, Mr. Markham?" he asked, with that abrupt earnestness which, in such a man, indicates quickened mental action.

"I have been looking into it in Boston, and Superintendent Zimmerman in New York," was the reply.

"Have the several persons through whose hands, in the usual course of events, this money package would have passed, been thoroughly examined?"

"Indeed they have, Chief Watts."

"By whom?"

"All by Superintendent Zimmerman, and some by myself."

"What do they state?"

"One and all tell the same story, sir. Our desk man, Roberts, who examined and receipted for the package, is absolutely sure that the seals were intact when it came into his hands. He is a thoroughly reliable man, one who is exceedingly careful in receiving valuable packages, and we have implicit confidence in him."

"And his younger brother?"

"He also testifies to the perfect condition of the package. He entered it on the waybill in the usual manner, and is positive concerning it when it left his hands. It went from him to the clerk who makes up the pouches."

"Does he, too, inspect the seals on all packages passing through his hands?"

"Invariably!" exclaimed Mr. Markham. "For he is held responsible for all money packages that he puts into the pouches for forwarding."

"Does he recall this particular package?"

"Perfectly! He is absolutely certain that it was properly sealed, and in good order. It was put into the pouch, and the latter sealed with the wire and metal stamp."

"Are these pouches made of leather?"

"Yes, sir. And any tampering with them would be easily detected. If ripped open or cut in any way, the fact would be immediately apparent. The pouch cannot be opened without breaking the metal seal, and every agent of our company who receives one of these pouches is required to examine the seal when receiving and delivering it. In this particular case, every man through whose hands the pouch passed has appeared either before Superintendent Zimmerman or myself, and one and all testify to its perfect condition. So far as we can establish, Chief Watts, the pouch was sent through to New York in the ordinary way, and was so received at the New York office."

"Are these men old and trusted employees of the company?"

"One and all of them, sir."

"What about the agent in New York who opened the pouch?"

"He found the wax seals untouched, and the package apparently in perfect condition. Had this not been so, he would have taken it in person to the consignee, and have had it opened in his presence. As it was, he turned it over to the delivery clerk, who at once carried it to the office of Steinfort Brothers, where he found Mr. Horton waiting."

"Did the agent see Mr. Horton open the package?"

"He did not. Horton gave him a receipt for it, and

he came away. The next we knew was the report of the robbery. Horton wired home to Hague, and also reported his loss at the New York office."

Chief Watts stroked his chin, and asked quietly:

"Do you wish me to undertake to find this money, or at least to apprehend the person by whom it was stolen?"

"That is precisely what I am here for, Chief Watts."

"I will look into the case, then. Are the documents, envelope, and pouch where I can see them?"

"They are at Superintendent Zimmerman's office, in New York."

"Very good. I want now an orderly list of the several parties through whose hands the package passed after leaving the bank messenger."

"I will give you their names in full, if Detective Keene will note them," bowed Markham, referring to his book.

A few minutes were occupied in tabulating the several names, and then Chief Watts said quietly:

"I think that is all, Mr. Markham. When I have anything to communicate, I will notify you."

"Will you go to work upon the case immediately, chief?"

"I never delay in a case of criminal investigation," was the rather dry rejoinder. "I will report upon the matter as soon as possible."

The portly manager arose, bowing his approval, and departed.

"Well, Sheridan Keene, here is something for you to take hold of," observed Chief Watts, laughing lightly.

"Rather a mysterious case," rejoined Keene, looking up from his notes.

"It is a matter of identity," said Chief Watts, with a quick flash of his blue eyes. "That money did not evaporate, my boy. Bank notes usually stay where they are put, unless some person's fingers get upon them, and these seven one-thousand-dollar bills did not, of course, escape of themselves from that sealed envelope, assuming that they were put into it. This money has been stolen, deliberately and adroitly. It becomes a case of establishing the identity of the thief, the hand of the guilty."

"Do you wish me to undertake the investigation?" asked Keene quietly.

"Yes, you had better do so, and plan to make a systematic study of the case."

"Have you any suggestions to offer?"

"There are certain pertinent features of the case, which no doubt appeal to you as well as to me," Chief Watts said, drawing nearer and taking up the detective's block of notes. "I will run them over."

"I wish you would."

"The permit of a few deductions, merely. This Mr. Hague evidently is not perfectly honest, as appears in his attempt to defraud the express company. It was a dirty little scheme for the sake of saving, as Mr. Markham expressed it, a few paltry dollars. Whether there is some deeper scheme on the part of Horton & Hague remains to be discovered."

"Can they recover from the express company?"

"I do not think so. The express company has delivered a package valued at five thousand dollars, which is all it agreed to do. Horton & Hague could recover only by expensive litigation, and as the money was drawn against their own deposit in the Mutual National Bank, I am inclined to think their design was merely one to reduce express charges."

"That seems reasonable."

"Yet I think you had better go to New York, and investigate that end of the case in a quiet way. Have a talk with Steinforth Brothers, and learn the precise circumstances under which the package was received and opened. Find out if the New York firm saw the money taken from the envelope and counted, and just what Horton's movements and observations were, both then and previous to the receipt of the package."

"I will do so."

"Then visit Superintendent Zimmerman, and examine the evidence in his possession. If you think it necessary, you may interview each of the parties through whose hands the money package passed. At present, however, I do not think the money was abstracted by any of the express company's employees. The evidence is that the package went through in good time, and was received in good order."

"I think you are right, Chief Watts," nodded Keene. "I believe that all the money that was put under seal was safely delivered. Whether Horton adroitly abstracted any of it when opening the package, is a question. Also, whether the entire amount was put in the envelope."

"It is my present idea that the theft was committed at either one end of the transaction or the other. Yet Hague is positive that the bank clerk inclosed and sealed the entire amount, and a collusion between the two is hardly probable. You had better look them up, however."

"Never doubt that I will do that," laughed Sheridan Keene.

"Also the bank messenger who took the package from the bank to the express office, and whom Hague made it a point to accompany. There may be some knavery between those two, for I don't quite like the actions of Hague. It is barely possible that he is scheming to defraud Horton, his partner."

"By Jove, that's so!"

"I rather think the felony was in some way committed at this end of the transaction," added the chief, with grave earnestness. "You had better make a thorough investigation in New York, however, to obviate the need of a second journey; and then, if you discover no more than Markham has disclosed, take up the case at this end."

"I will be governed by your suggestions, chief."

"Be guided, rather; and let your own judgment govern you," replied Chief Watts. "When will you go to New York?"

"By the first train," said Sheridan Keene, rising and taking his hat.

CHAPTER IV.

KEENE MAKES A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE.

It was nearly five o'clock, almost the hour when the magnificent steamer *Puritan,* of the Fall River line, between New York and Boston, should clear from the pier in the East River and begin her night trip through the Sound.

The dock was crowded with vehicles of nearly every description. Longshoremen were rushing the last packages of merchandise into the steamer's hold. Porters, cabmen, and stewards were stirring in every direction, and a throng of people were surging to and from the palatial boat.

On the main deck amidships, just forward of the paddle box, Sheridan Keene stood gazing down upon the busy and tumultuous scene. Several days had passed since the scene in the office of Chief Watts, and Keene was now returning to Boston, his mission in New York having been accomplished.

It had not been fruitful. His inquiries at the office of Steinfort Brothers, and his examination of the evidence in the hands of Superintendent Zimmerman, with whom he had had a long consideration of the mysterious robbery, had served only to sustain the statements made by Mr. Markham.

The result was not encouraging, and Sheridan Keene felt out of sorts. There are cases at times that baffle the persistent efforts of the most astute detectives, and ultimately fade into the dim and shadowy vistas of the past, unsolved, and finally forgotten.

In all the cases assigned him, Sheridan Keene never yet had suffered the chagrin and disappointment of failure; but the mystery of the Surety Express package seemed to grow darker with every step he had taken, and, despite his habitual confidence and determination, the shadow of failure irrepressibly stole upon and depressed him.

"All ashore who are going ashore! All ashore who are going!"

The warning cry of the colored porter came up to his ears, and the hurry of people over the gangway increased. The dull, long-sustained bellow of the steamer's whistle augmented the general din. The *Puritan* was about to clear from the pier.

Sheridan Keene approached one of the passages giving egress to the main saloon, and was about to enter, when the sound of loud voices from the dock caused him to return.

"Hold on with the gangway!" roared one.

"Here's another passenger!"

"Belay, there!"

Keene again approached the rail and looked down.

Threading its way among the many vehicles on the dock, as if guided by a hand accustomed to such confusion, a hansom cab was rapidly approaching. It stopped nearly opposite the gangway. The passenger was a young woman, and as the cabman sprang down to her assistance, half a dozen colored porters also ran to her aid.

"Hurry up, there!" yelled the purser's assistant, from the boat.

"Aye, aye, sir! All aboard!"

And before the delinquent young lady fairly realized it, she and her single piece of luggage had been hustled over the gangway and into the lower saloon, and the gangplank withdrawn.

"A close shave," thought Sheridan Keene, laughing to himself. "Curious how women delay until the very last moment."

He had noticed only the general appearance of the woman, yet the incident rather pleased him; she had been received and handled with such unceremonious celerity. He did not imagine he should see her again amid the throng upon the boat, for the month was October, and the transportation large. Instead of entering the cabin, he now mounted to the upper deck, to view the animated prospect as the huge steamer plowed her way up the East River and under the Brooklyn Bridge.

He descended a half hour later, and went forward. He was intent only upon pleasantly passing the time until dinner was served, and all the while revolving in mind the mysterious case engaging his attention. He had no eyes for the other passengers, save in a general way; yet he passed through the forward saloon to seek the forward deck, and noticed some distance in advance of him the woman who had so tardily boarded the boat as she was about leaving.

Closer inspection revealed her to be a young woman, and he imagined her not more than twenty-two, with a pretty face and bright eyes, of a kind termed roguish. While there was considerable of it, the color in her cheeks was natural, and she was stylishly dressed.

There was something about her, nevertheless, which led Sheridan Keene, who was an acute observer of persons and character, to dryly remark within himself:

"If she were a boat, I should call her rakish."

She passed out to the forward deck in advance of him, and Keene presently approached the door by which she had disappeared. As he forced it open against the pressure of wind outside, the sound of the girl's voice came sharply to his ears.

"You are no gentleman!" she cried.

The words were not addressed to Sheridan Keene, but they quickened instantly that manly and valiant part of his nature which responded to distress in a woman. He stepped out upon the deck, and the door closed sharply behind him.

A mere glance at the scene told him the whole situation. Because of the furious breeze forward there were but few people outside, and these were scattered. Down near the starboard rail, with her garments twined about her graceful figure by the rush of the wind, the girl whom he had noticed was shrinking from the bold and unwarrantable advances of a young fellow in a flashy, plaid suit, whose scurrilous smile and general air of insolent familiarity showed at once that he was attempting to force the girl's acquaintance.

"Now, don't be foolishly offended," he at once replied, not observing Keene. "Of course you know me, and I can tell you just where we met last. I know I am not mistaken, because I never forget a pretty face like yours."

"You are mistaken!" angrily declared the girl, with cheeks red and eyes flashing. "You are an insolent cad!"

"Ah, no, I'm not! For you will listen——"

"Let me go back to the cabin!"

"Hold one moment! I——"

"Let the girl return, if she wishes," commanded Sheridan Keene, drawing nearer.

The fellow in plaid wheeled sharp about, and then involuntarily recoiled from the look in the detective's frowning eyes. He hung fire for an instant, then demanded resentfully:

"Aren't you meddling with what don't concern you?"

"Do you think so?"

"I do! This lady is an old acquaintance, only she forgets——"

"Stop right there!" cried Keene sternly. "Your own face declares you a liar! Now, you go about your own business, and don't molest this girl or I'll thrash you within an inch of your life! If that is not strong enough, I'll do it here and now!"

There were few men who, if in the wrong, would stand up before Sheridan Keene's anger and indignation. For

a moment only the fellow in plaid hesitated, and then he slunk away with a sneer on his lips, and crossed to the port rail.

Keene turned to the girl as if nothing had happened.

"I beg your pardon for interposing," he said, raising his hat; "but the circumstances appeared to warrant it."

He felt inclined to laugh at the picture she now presented. The wind had given her hat a cant to one side, adding a ludicrous effect to her general rakish appearance, while the insolence to which she had been subjected had increased the glow in her cheeks, and the fire in her brilliant eyes. The latter were so sparkling, indeed, that Keene decided that she had dined with friends before embarking, and that wine had been served with the courses.

A smile dispelled the stern severity of the detective's handsome face when he addressed her, at which the girl burst out laughing, and replied with an abandon that rather startled him:

"Oh, you are a jolly good fellow to have done it. Not that I was afraid of the saucebox; far from it. But it served him right to be called down by a man who is a man, and I am your debtor that much."

"Don't mention it," said Keene, amused despite himself by her volubility, and never dreaming that she possibly could be concerned in the mysterious robbery of the Adams Express Company. "Are you traveling alone?"

"Quite so—up to the present time," she added, laughing archly.

Keene smiled and drew nearer.

"On your way to Boston?" he asked lightly.

"Yes."

"Live there?"

"When I am at home."

"So do I. Perhaps I know some of your people," said Keene, fishing for her name.

"No, you don't," she replied; "for I haven't any. I am a poor, lone orphan of tender years," she added, with a giggle.

Despite his acuteness, Sheridan Keene could not quite take the girl's measure. She did not look like a girl about town, and her manner had the flavor of artlessness, despite her abandon, which may have been due to what little wine she had indulged herself. The girl was evidently shrewd and self-reliant, however, and Keene ventured to ask, with a politeness that tempered the question:

"Where do you live in Boston?"

"On Appleton Street. I have a room there, and take my meals out."

"Do you visit New York frequently?"

"No; never was there before," was the reply, with a short laugh. "But I have a cousin there, and I ran over to see her and have a bit of a lark. But, heavens, sir! she's too familiarly fly for me, so I gave her the slip in Delmonico's and flew downtown to the boat in a hansom cab. 'Twas a close call getting it, at that."

Keene smiled as he recalled the incident.

"So I observed," he rejoined. "I saw you when you embarked. Would you like to return to the cabin? It is quite windy out here."

"Yes, if you please," she replied, with a roguish glance at Keene's fine, dark eyes. "Take my hand, or I may be blown overboard."

"That would be disastrous," laughed Keene, assisting her to the saloon. "Shall you dine on the boat?"

"No, I have had all I want and am going to bed when I find my stateroom. Perhaps I will see you on the train in the morning, if you wish," she added.

"Very pleased, I am sure," bowed Keene. "Do you have any occupation in Boston, may I ask?"

"Well, I work at times," she said slowly; then added: "This is only a little vacation."

"I see," nodded Keene.

"I had a little money, so thought I would take a week off and enjoy myself."

"Some money you have saved?" said Keene casually.

To his surprise the girl shot a quick glance at him, so sharp and suspicious that he could not but observe it.

"Yes, of course I saved it!" she exclaimed. "Where do you suppose I got it?"

"I meant no offense," said Keene assuasively.

"None taken, then, I assure you," laughed the girl, yet her eyes were still suspiciously studying his. "Yes. I saved the money, of course. I have no one to give me any. No such good luck as that."

"May I inquire your name?"

"Why not, indeed!" she exclaimed, with a shrug of her shoulders. "It is Annie Malcolm. Pretty name, isn't it?"

"Very!" bowed Keene, laughing.

"What's yours?"

"My name is Sheridan," was the evasive reply.

"Mr. Sheridan, eh? Well, that's not bad! I am going to my room, now, Mr. Sheridan. I may see you in the morning."

So the incident began and ended. Sheridan Keene felt no special interest in the girl, and did not rise for the early train from Fall River; and before he had set foot in Boston the following morning, both the girl and her name had passed out of his mind.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE SCIENCE OF ASTRONOMY.

Of all the great sciences, astronomy is probably the one of which the world at large knows least. Indeed there are, no doubt, very many persons who will confess that they can see no good to be derived from its study. It is not worth while to argue with such persons or to point out the many material benefits which have resulted to agriculture and commerce principally from a study of the stars. Astronomy is a great science, and it is interesting to go back to its birth and have a look at its babyhood.

They who have given the subject study say that astronomy owes its birth to the shepherd, who beguiled the long nightwatch by a study of the twinkling lights in the dome of heaven. By some the Chaldeans and Egyptians are credited with the first knowledge of the stars, and by others the Chinese are given precedence. It is of no real consequence who were the first to study the stars, for their study was to so little purpose, that instead of getting truth from it, they only used the few facts they obtained to build the most fantastic theories on. Early man, as might be expected, was of the earth very earthy, and he could not comprehend the existence of anything which did not apply to himself. There is not, it may be noticed, such a vast difference in this respect between

early man and the present man, who scorns and calls useless anything—such as astronomy, for example—which does not visibly put meat into his mouth or money into his pocket.

The early star gazers, then, made up theories which held that the lives of men were regulated by the stars; and there were thousands of years that nothing could be done of any importance without first consulting the stars. Our very common word, disastrous, from the original Greek word, astron, a star, shows how firm a hold the belief in the influence of stars had. This was not astronomy at all, but astrology. Like all superstitions, however, it clung to the human mind, and even at this day there are those who believe in astrology. Even the great Napoleon could not shake off the superstition, but had firm faith in the influence of his particular star. Milton, too, seemed to consider astrology worthy of belief, if one may judge from frequent allusions in his writings to planetary influences.

However, there is no great matter for wonder in this, for the famous astronomer, Tyche Brahe, believed in astrology to the day of his death, and, to the misfortune of weak minds, made a remarkable prediction founded on the comet of 1577. He said that a warrior would be born in Finland, who would lay waste Germany, and disappear in 1632. Gustavus Adolphus fulfilled his prediction to the letter.

Notwithstanding the general faith in astrology, there were for centuries those who declared it folly. The great Cicero was one of these. It was not, however, until the real motion and condition of the stars were ascertained that astrology was cast aside by men of science. Astronomy then began to grow with rapid strides, and astrology, picked up by the charlatans and quacks, has grown weaker and weaker, until now it is almost dead. As a science, indeed, it is dead, for even its high priests now have none of the systematic knowledge which formerly dignified its students. As chemistry was developed out of alchemy, so it may be said was astronomy developed out of astrology.

BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

It is a curious fact that the precise nature of the mud which is formed at the bottom of the sea has been only recently determined. It is found, on analysis, to consist of organic matter, more or less decomposed, interspersed with minute round bodies about sixteen one-hundredths of an inch in diameter. These bodies have been called coccospheres and coccolites, and are so set in the mud as to resemble mosaic work. Some of these look under the microscope like thick watch glasses. Immense numbers of minute shells are also found. The mud is excessively sticky, being rendered so by minute pellets of a jellylike consistency. These pellets are dotted all over their surfaces, and are found to contain great numbers of granules, from one-four-thousandth to one-twenty-thousandth of an inch in diameter; they are, undoubtedly, organic in their character, forming, perhaps, one of the representatives of the assumed ground between plants and animals.

THE DISCOVERY OF COFFEE.

Near the middle of the fifteenth century a poor Arab was traveling through Abyssinia, and, finding himself weak and weary from fatigue, he stopped near a grove. Then, being in want of fuel to cook his rice, he cut down a tree which happened to be covered with dead berries. His meal being cooked and eaten, the traveler discovered that the half-burned berries were very fragrant. He collected a number of these, and, on crushing them with a stone, he found that their aroma increased to a great extent. While wondering at this he accidentally let fall the substance in a can which contained his scanty supply of water. Lo, what a miracle! The almost putrid liquid was instantly purified. He brought it to his lips; it was fresh, agreeable, and in a moment after the traveler had so far recovered his strength and energy as to be able to resume his journey. The lucky Arab gathered as many berries as he could, and, having arrived at Arden, in Arabia, he informed the mufti of his discovery. That worthy divine was an inveterate opium smoker, who had been suffering for years from the influence of that poisonous drug. He tried an infusion of the roasted berries, and was so delighted at the recovery of his own vigor that in gratitude to the tree he called it cahuah, which in Arabic signifies force. And that is the way in which coffee was discovered.

PURITY OF ICE.

Besides the fact that ice is lighter than water, there is another curious thing about it which persons do not know perhaps, namely, its purity. A lump of ice melted will always become purely distilled water. When the early navigators of the arctic seas got out of water they melted fragments of those vast mountains of ice called icebergs, and were astonished to find they yielded only fresh water. They thought that they were frozen salt water, not knowing that they were formed on the land, and in some way launched into the sea. But if they had been right, the result would have been all the same. The fact is, the water in freezing turns out of it all that is not water, salt, air, coloring matter, and all impurities. Frozen salt water makes fresh ice water. If you freeze a basin of indigo water, it will make it as pure as that made of pure rain water. When the cold is very sudden, these foreign matters have no time to escape, either by rising or sinking, and are entangled with the ice, but do not form any part of it.

A WORD ABOUT THE HOUSEFLY.

Many of our young readers—and perhaps some "children of a larger growth"—have often wondered, no doubt, what it is that enables a fly to walk upon a ceiling. If they come to examine his mechanism they will wonder no longer. The fly has six legs—three on each side. These are jointed, and the toe joint ends in two or three minute fleshy pads, which act as suckers, with minute bristles and two claws to boot. With this complicated apparatus, and especially the hairs, which are tubular, and secrete an adhesive fluid, the fly is enabled to walk head downward, or with his whole body reversed, on glass; while as for walking on ceilings, this is so easy a task that a fly on being questioned how it did it, would probably laugh in the face of the biped inquirer at so simple a question, and ask itself: "Do these vertebrate creatures have brains and any sort of reason that they are so idiotic and empty-headed?" and then walk off, giving its own brain box a knowing tap with some one of its six toes.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Americans Will Coach French for Olympic Games.

American coaches will be asked to help prepare the French athletes for the next Olympic games. This is the outcome of the poor performance of French athletes at Stockholm, and the brilliant showing made there by the Americans. France has taken the lesson of the games to heart, and is forming an organization to get ready a representative and properly trained team for the Berlin games.

An influential committee has been named, and on it one finds such names as those of Auguste Rodin, the sculptor; Jean Richepin, the playwright and author; Gabriel Bonvalot, the explorer, and the Marquis de Polignac.

The committee has decided to found an athletic college. The college will possess football grounds, running tracks, a large swimming pool, and all other modern appurtenances. It is the intention of the promoters to send athletes from the college to instruct the authorities in the provinces as to the training and organization of athletic teams.

China to Build Railroads.

Construction work in accordance with Doctor Sun Yat Sen's plan for gridironing China with a huge system of state-owned railroads will be begun on a large scale in the spring, the doctor stated recently at Shanghai.

Payment of an initial loan of $10,000,000 from a Belgian syndicate for railroad building is already in progress.

Rand Gold Mines Said to Lose $5,000,000 Yearly Without Detection.

It is known that several members of the Transvaal, South Africa, secret service have just arrived in London for the purpose of running down the heads of a supposed syndicate which for years has been robbing the Rand mines of gold to the tune of $5,000,000 annually. Worst of all, there has not been a single conviction for theft in all the time.

There are various forms of gold "transit," but the latest and most successful is that of converting the smuggled metal into process blocks and dispatching them frankly from Johannesburg to England to certain prearranged addresses. A gold process block looks very much like a heavy "electro," and the open manner in which the thieves went to work assisted in throwing the police off their guard.

It seems that one of the principals engaged in this precious system in Johannesburg was a woman, who received the unwrought metal from mine employees, appraised it, and paid for it. So far she has eluded the vigilant "secret-service" specialists, and is living in luxury on her "business."

"Ever since the opening of the gold-mining industry on the Rand," said a detective connected with the case, "it was found necessary, as soon as things had been made more or less shipshape, to get the government to pass a special law to deal with gold stealing. In spite of this, the percentage of loss by theft grew greater. The abstraction of gold became a fine art. It was not stolen by the professional thief, but, more often than not, by trusted employees in the mines.

"Most of the gold was, and is, stolen in the form of amalgam, 'plated' in a highly scientific manner, either by scraping the metal from the battery plates with a small knife, or 'fishing' for it with a thin copper wire."

Douglas Blackburn, in his book on "Secret Service in South Africa," describes many ways and methods of stealing and smuggling gold—but the process-block system is quite new to him. The copper-wire idea was detected by a sudden desire by mine Kafirs for copper wire. They would give as much as threepence an inch for it, and the game had been going on for a year before it was detected—by a sheer accident.

When a new law was made to deal with receivers, a special detective force was told off to look after the new department, and the early experiences of the hunters of the illicit gold buyers gave cause for much laughter at their expense, for the chief detective and some of his subordinates were among the easiest dupes of a gang of clever Americans, who introduced a version of the American "gold-brick" swindle with "uproarious success."

From this it was no more than a step to the process-block idea, the inventor of which almost deserves the fortune he has made, because of the simplicity of his scheme and its unblushing effrontery.

The difficulty of a capture in cases of stealing and smuggling gold is tremendous. Mr. Blackburn declares that "it is probably unique in the history of crime detection that no conviction has so far been obtained against any person for actually stealing gold or amalgam from any Rand mine. . . . One suggestion has been that the offenders were too highly placed to warrant action."

Can Mail Parcels to Domingo.

Notice has been issued from the office of the second assistant postmaster general, at Washington, that on and after January 1, 1913, parcels-post packages for destination in the Dominican republic will be admitted to the mails. They must not, the notice says, weigh more than 11 pounds, nor measure more than 3 feet 6 inches in length and 6 feet in length and girth combined.

Postage on packages sent from the United States will be 12 cents for each pound or fraction of a pound. The parcels-post mails will be made up at the post office in New York.

Turks Not Good Sailors.

Commander R. R. B. Hubbard, who until three years ago was a captain in the Turkish navy, did not believe that the Turks would be likely to be victorious in a sea conflict with the Greeks. In an interview, he said:

"The Greeks are born sailors, but the Turks—they will never make good seamen. Young Turkish naval officers receive a good theoretical knowledge of the sea, but that is about all.

"There are exceptions to the rule, but, taking them as a whole, the Turkish jacktars are showmen sailors rather than hard-working sailors, who know their business. While on board they wear light slippers, because they are frightened of hurting their feet.

"Generally fishermen on the coasts are pressed into the service of the navy, and they have to serve a term of five or seven years. But although they spend all this time in so-called training, they do not become first-class sailors. There is practically little or no boat drilling, and very little gun drill. The consequence is they are very bad shots.

"There is but little discipline on a Turkish ship. Those in command seem languid and lackadaisical, and in consequence the common sailor acts similarly.

"Greek sailors are loyal, well drilled, and well officered. They have much better ships than the Turks, and the average Greek sailor is a bloodthirsty, piratical devil."

Armed With Hatchets, Wives Warn Gamblers.

The women of Larned, Kan., encouraged by the recent efforts of the officers to round up the gamblers of the city, have formed an organization to assist, which they call an Antigambling Association.

All of the rules of the organization have not yet been formulated, but the following have been adopted:

"1—All members having a husband, brother, or father whom they suspect of gambling, or of being the victim of a gambling game, may appeal to the association, whereupon the whole association will turn out armed with such more or less innocent weapons of warfare as hatchets, ropes, et cetera, and every effort will be made to locate the offending party.

"2—All gamblers who have at times gone around in automobiles or buggies, carrying a gun and making pretense of going hunting as an excuse to entice husbands from their wives and children, when they were so much needed at home, are warned to heed this notice and give more consideration to the wives and children of said husbands, or to expect a visit from the members of the association armed with their 'innocent' weapons of warfare."

Distance Between Bases is What Makes Baseball a Great Game.

National League Umpire Eason recently advanced a proposition that the distance between the bases was the fundamental idea that made baseball the game it is, and this so startled a young New York scribe that he sent what he regarded as a good story broadcast as follows:

"Did you ever stop to consider the one fundamental thing that made baseball? It is the ninety feet between the bases. If the originators of baseball had not stepped off thirty paces and called them ninety feet it is doubtful if the great national game ever would have attained its present prominence.

"It is possible that the founders of base-

ball might have experimented and arrived at the present condition just as they made provision for change in the pitching distance when the occasion required, but that is doubtful. You stop and consider what ninety feet between the bases mean. Make it eighty-five and so many infield hits would be beaten out that there will be a parade around the bases. Increase it to ninety-five or one hundred feet, an additional stride, and there will be so many men thrown out on hard drives that the game will become uninteresting. The distance of ninety feet never has been changed, and it never will be, for the simple reason that it fills the requirements of baseball as well as if engineers had surveyed for months, instead of a few men pacing off thirty steps."

May Win Half a Million for Not Smoking or Drinking.

It looks very much as if Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, junior, of New York, would be called upon soon to pay a debt of honor to her young nephew, Hermann Oelrichs. The debt is a large one—some say $500,000 was the amount of the wager. But it was such a wager that Mrs. Vanderbilt, in losing it, will consider that she has won.

A few years ago, as young Oelrichs was nearing the age when boys regard cigarettes as the insignia of manhood, his aunt challenged him to lay part of his future fortune against a similar part of hers on the proposition that he would not smoke or touch intoxicants of any kind until he should reach his majority.

He accepted the challenge, and the time of settlement will arrive with his twenty-first birthday.

Thus has "gambling" been turned into a virtue to conquer other evils.

Mrs. Vanderbilt may well be proud of her losses. Her nephew, who is a chum of Vincent Astor, and a student in the law school of Columbia, has been for years the model youth of Newport and New York society. And he has been an example to the other fellows in proving that a boy can shun bad habits without being a mollycoddle.

None of his set is farther from being a mollycoddle than Oelrichs. He is one of the most daring motorists in the country, a clever boxer and fencer, and has won trophies at golf and tennis.

Moreover, he is regarded as a young Chesterfield in manner and dress. He attends all the smartest functions of summer and winter, and is always popular in society abroad.

Two years ago he and Vincent Astor had a motor-car race on the sand of the Second Beach at Newport. Oelrichs' car caught fire, but he kept going till he had won the race, and then had to drive into the ocean to put out the fire.

French Bombs Break Through Plating of Ironclad in Test.

Remarkable results were obtained recently from a series of experiments with the new submarine bomb, which the French naval authorities have been testing at Cherbourg under conditions of the greatest secrecy.

The old ironclad *Neptune*, which was used as a target, sank to the bottom of the military harbor as soon as it was hit by one of these bombs. When the ship was floated for inspection it was seen that tremendous damage had been done. The projectiles had broken right through the armor plating, destroying everything in their course. One of them had got as far as the condenser, and had blown the water-tight partitions to pieces by the force of the explosion, while another had hit the armored tower on the lower deck, reducing it to scrap iron.

The strictest precautions were taken to prevent the smallest detail of the construction of these bombs from being known.

The *Neptune*, since she was brought to the surface, has been guarded day and night by sentries, who have refused entry to all but members of the commission appointed to make the tests.

To make it certain that the report shall reach the navy minister, M. Delcasse, without the possibility of being tampered with, a high naval officer traveled from Cherbourg to Paris with the document and specimen splinters of the exploded bombs.

Would Create Legal Internes.

The college-trained young lawyer is now in the spotlight of educational controversy. It is admitted that a course in a school of law is indispensable, but it is also agreed that young men fresh from law classes lack something of importance which those who were graduated in the old days directly from a lawyer's office possessed.

The educators are not very explicit in naming the "lacking qualities." Perhaps the student spends too much time with his books and not enough in the courtroom. One facetious critic thinks the law schools ought to put in a course on starvation, original research work to be required the first five years after graduation.

As a substitute for this graduate work in starvation, Chancellor Elmer Ellsworth Brown, of New York University, and some of his university associates suggest a solution of the difficulty through statutory provisions under which law-school graduates, fresh from their studies, might practice in certain courts under supervision analogous to that to which the hospital interne is subjected. It has even been suggested that a special court might be constituted for the purpose, in which such supervised practice might, in certain classes of cases, be provided gratuitously for clients who are unable to pay. Humanity has managed to struggle along with the medical interne. Why not give the young lawyer his chance at hospital practice?

Priest Rushed on Aeroplane to Soldier's Deathbed.

A fierce skirmish between 500 sharpshooting Spahis and 2,000 Touaregs, resulting in the rout of the latter, took place at Chebak, one of the most desolate places in the desert, a two days' march from Laghouat.

One of the French officers, Commandant Largest, was wounded mortally by a bullet in his chest. On being informed that he had only three or four hours to live, the dying man murmured:

"To die is nothing, but to die without a priest or the consolations of religion is hard."

These words were overheard by a brother officer, who, as a skilled aviator, had accompanied the column with a monoplane. "I will find you a priest!" he exclaimed, dashing to his machine, started the motor, rose, and disappeared in the north. Two hours later, he reached Laghouat. Landing and jumping to the ground, he ran to the hospital, and in a few words explained his mission to the priest in charge.

"I am at your disposal," at once replied the latter, "only give me time to get my surplice, the holy oils, and the viaticum."

Five minutes later he was in the air with the lieutenant, praying and holding to his breast the little silver box containing the consecrated host. Alighting at the camp, the priest, filled with emotion, hastened to the tent of the dying man, who, buoyed up by hope, had been struggling against death for four hours.

"I thank thee, O God," he cried faintly, as the priest, after hearing his confession, placed the sacred water on his lips. A few moments later the officer died peacefully.

Barber's War Brings Three-cent Shaves.

The male population of Pulaski, a little town eleven miles south of Sharon, Pa., is benefiting by a rate war among its three barbers. Three-cent shaves are in order, and one of the tonsorial artists says he will give free shaves if the other barbers continue their "ruinous" prices.

The cut was brought about when a negro barber located in the town and immediately cut prices. He announced that he would charge only 5 cents for shaving. One of the other shops came out with a 3-cent price, and it is predicted that free shaves will come within a short time.

Smooth faces are the rule now for the men, and the young women of the town say they hope the price war continues.

Butter and Eggs by Post.

In view of the recent introduction of the parcels-post service in this country, it is interesting to note that in Germany it is used to a very large extent by farmers in their dealings with city customers, and especially for delivery of butter and eggs. Butter thus shipped is wrapped first in parchment paper, and then packed in a cardboard box. As a rule, shipments under ten pounds are not made, each pound being separately wrapped, the total shipment including nine pounds of butter, net.

These pasteboard butter boxes come with an upper and lower part, and are folded together and fastened with metal clamps to make the finished box. In knocked-down condition these boxes can be had in this country, says *Trade and Transportation*, for $23.20 per thousand for the best quality and $21.42 for the second quality. The boxes can be saved and used over again. The clamps cost 33 cents per thousand.

Eggs are shipped either in strong cardboard or wooden boxes, the inside of which contains corrugated cardboard partitions forming squares large enough to receive one egg. Between each layer of cardboard partitions a sheet of cardboard is placed. The wooden boxes are rather attractively finished and cost at retail 95 cents each. They are provided with a padlock and neat cover, and can be used for an indefinite period. Pasteboard egg boxes containing partitions for ten eggs can be had for $45.22 per thousand, and boxes to contain 25 eggs for $71.40 per thousand.

British Ambassador to this Country Resigns.

The Right Honorable James Bryce, the British ambassador, has notified President Taft that he has tendered his resignation to his government, and will return to England. No date has been set for the re-

tirement of the ambassador. That will remain to be settled by the British government.

Mr. Bryce has been credited with contemplating this action for a year or more. Prior to his recent trip to Australia and New Zealand, it was reported that he intended to retire to private life soon after he resumed his post in Washington.

To Enlarge Japan's Merchant Fleet.

It was announced at San Francisco recently, at the offices of the Toyo Kisen Kaisha Steamship Company that three new steamers would be added in the near future to the company's fleet between Hongkong and the west coast of South America. This company operates a small line between Japanese ports and Valparaiso, under government subsidies.

Entire Tribe of Indians to Marry to Save Their Lands.

The entire tribe of Winnebago Indians, in Nebraska, has decided to get married. In formal tribal council in which every male on the reservation participated, the Indians voted to forsake the ways of their fathers in the matter of matrimony and to marry in the white man's way. As soon as the arrangements can be made, something like 1,000 couples of Indians will stand up and be married at the same time and by the same ceremony. Double weddings are not common; triple weddings are rare, quadruple weddings are almost unheard of, and when the 2,000 Winnebagoes stand up to be joined, the marriage record of all time will be broken.

The Indians already are making great preparations for the event, but these will probably not be completed until next spring. No Indian tribe would miss an opportunity of this kind to receive presents. In fact, when the big wedding is over the Winnebagoes expect to be the richest tribe in the West. According to Indian custom, the giving of presents is a virtue—one of the greatest virtues. Tribes often "give themselves poor." Individual Indians will frequently give away everything they possess, and in the present case the Winnebagoes will be the recipients of "heap presents."

Already the Winnebagoes have sent official invitations to other tribes. The Sioux, in the Dakotas, have been asked to come to the big affair, and so have the Crows, in Montana. The Arapahoes and Arikaries, of Wyoming, will be present. The other portion of Winnebagoes, in Minnesota, will be specially urged to come down in force. Poncas, Osages, Creeks, and other tribes, from Oklahoma, have been invited. And the Omahas, the near neighbors of the Winnebagoes, have promised to come en masse. The exact date has not yet been set, but the Winnebagoes wish to give their friends notice of the coming affair, in order that the latter may begin saving for presents.

Practically all Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, and most of those west of the range, have long since adopted the white man's manner of marriage. Not so with the Winnebagoes. Although living in the midst of whites, these Indians have maintained their tribal customs regarding marriage. Polygamy is common, and desertion constitutes divorce. Scarcely a man on the reservation but has had from thirteen to twenty wives, and scarcely a woman but has had that number of husbands. No Winnebago knows, when he leaves his cabin in the morning, if he will have a wife upon his return, and no Winnebago woman knows when her husband will throw her out of his house and refuse to permit her to return. There are no marriage vows, and but a small fraction of the Indians have ever been married according to the white man's way.

Some time ago the government began the task of allotting a farm to each Winnebago. Then arose the question of land for the children. And further, to whom did the children belong? It was an almost superhuman task to which the government agents set themselves. But the work was finally completed and each Indian received a farm. However, there remained what is termed "heirship" land, and there was a question as to just whom this land belonged. The wiser Indians saw the trouble and were intelligent enough to see that some way must be provided by which the title to future heirship land could be kept straight. They discussed the matter with the missionaries, the Indian agent, and with lawyers of the adjoining tribe of Omahas. It was settled that the only remedy lay in marriage according to the State law.

So these few intelligent Indians began the task of inducing all the Winnebagoes to forsake polygamy and to be married according to the ways of white men. After talking for months, they called a grand council of the tribe, and still further to stimulate matrimonial action, announced the forthcoming big wedding, at which all the Indians would be married.

The idea took and the Winnebagoes, without a dissenting voice, voted to get their licenses and be married just like the whites. There will be a big marriage feast, at which a dozen or more steers will be roasted. There will be a week or more of dancing, horse-racing, and general good time. And then will come the distribution of presents, after which the Winnebagoes will go back to housekeeping with their marital bonds firmly forged.

New Oil-burning Yacht for Zeigler.

William Zeigler, junior, of New York, is having a fine yacht built at Lawler's yard, at Boston, Mass. It will be launched next June.

The craft will be 165 feet long and will have twin screws and two triple-expansion engines of 100 horse power each, which will be run with oil burners.

Saves Battleship from Bad Luck.

A husky dock worker, clad in overalls, prevented the word "hoodoo" being applied to the monster fighting machine, the *New York*, as the latest of Uncle Sam's dreadnaughts was launched at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Miss Elsie Carter, chosen to christen the giant craft, did not have strength to throw the customary bottle of champagne with force enough against the slanting steel prow. Three times the girl tried, but the blow was glancing. Then, as the great hull was slipping beyond her reach, she looked appealingly at one of the workers, perched on the structure above her head. Quick to act, the man hauled up the ribboned rope with which the bottle was attached to the craft, swung it high, and, with a mighty blow, spilled champagne all over the bow of the *New York*. The christening was a success.

The *New York* is half done and has already cost $6,000,000. The new battleship will carry ten fourteen-inch guns. Each shot fired from one of these big guns will cost $600. But the guns will be able to send a projectile crashing through an armored cruiser over twelve miles away.

Here's a Demand, Ball Players!

The demand for pay during the training season which is to be made by the Players' Fraternity is sure to be met by a stiff refusal on the part of club owners. The clubs stand the expense of the training season, estimated at $200,000, so as to fit the players for their work. If there were no training period a majority would report unfit to do their work, and when in that condition could hardly demand their salaries. Just how far the fraternity, through President Dave Fultz, will attempt to press any such demand remains to be seen.

Find Whooping Cough Germs.

From Boston City Hospital comes news of a discovery of the utmost importance to the future treatment of whooping cough in children and adults. This is the demonstration by Doctor F. B. Mallory, of the Pathological Laboratory, of the specific lesion in pertussis, as whooping cough is scientifically termed, and the definite assignment of its causal agent, a minute bacillus suspected for 12 years to be the active germ of the disease. Doctor Mallory was assisted in his researches by Doctors A. A. Hornor and F. F. Henderson.

The bacillus was discovered first in the patient's sputum by Doctor Bordet and Doctor Gengou, of the Pasteur Institute, at Paris, in 1900. A pure culture of the germ—that is, one unmixed with other organisms—was not obtained by the French doctors until 1906, when the discovery was confirmed by a pathological reaction obtained from the injection of the culture into the patient's blood. Klimenko, a German doctor, followed up the work of Bordet and Gengou in 1908, and, in addition, succeeded in producing an identical infection of the respiratory tract by the introduction of the germ into young monkeys and puppies.

Doctor Mallory has succeeded in tracing the specific habitat of the microbe to the cilia of the epithelial cells lining the trachea or windpipe and the small bronchial tubes. Cilia are a number of minute hairlike structures which lie on the free surface of the cells lining these organs. In the healthy membrane they are constantly in activity, with a whisklike motion, and part of their office is to keep the air which enters the lungs free of organisms. Round the bases and in between the stems of these cilia the Bordet-Gengou microbes grow and propagate themselves in thick, clustering colonies. Their action on the tiny whisks is a mechanical one. They clog the normal movements of the cilia, sometimes wear them down to mere stumps, and occasionally cause them to assume a mushroom shape. In addition to their toxic action on the blood, they hinder the cilia from performing their normal office, and frequently the broncho-pneumonic germs which are present in the throat of one-third of even healthy persons get into the lungs and cause death.

The microbe whose position Doctor Mallory has located is ovoid in shape, and its form is barely perceptible when magnified a thousandfold. It stains very lightly under the methyllin blue process, and it is prob-

ably on that account that it has been overlooked so long. In differentiating it—that is, in decolorizing the surrounding tissue for the microscope while leaving the organism and cells distinct—Doctor Mallory employed exposure to sunlight from one to two hours, instead of the customary bath in alcohol, with good result. Cultures of the germ were made on a composition of potato, beef blood, and "agger," a special kind of gelatin made from seaweed and imported from China.

Uses Soy Beans for Coffee.

I. M. Glick, a farmer living near Brookhaven, Miss., has devised a scheme that will add materially to the war on the high cost of living as far as one article of general household use is concerned. That item is coffee, and Glick is raising three-fourths of the coffee he uses on his own place.

It is nothing more or less than the yellow soy bean, which grows luxuriantly all over Mississippi, and makes a few tons more or less per acre. Glick got the idea from a New Orleans coffee drummer a few months ago, who said that the price of Brazilian coffee was so high the coffee manufacturers were compelled to put a cereal "filler" in to sort of equalize things. He mentioned chicory and cereals, and Glick began to experiment with various cereals.

Finally he came to the soy bean. Some of the beans were roasted and ground. It looked, smelled, and tasted remarkably like coffee. By itself it did not have exactly the right flavor, so he combined it with some coffee he roasted, and found that the mixture of one part coffee and three parts soy bean made a very fine combination, and the coffee flavor predominated, while the soy bean furnished the oil and body to the drink.

Glick claims no patent on his idea, nor is he selling anything. He simply says that coffee has got to the point where it is getting expensive, and he has cut three-fourths of the cost off.

Women Get Rich as Trappers.

Many trappers have left Seattle for the remote Northwest, where streams and lakes abound with fur-bearing animals such as otter, fox, sable, beaver, mink, weasel, and ermine.

Pelts that sold ten years ago for from $6 to $20 apiece now bring double these figures. Black and white fox skins are quoted so high that none but the rich may own them.

Trapping was formerly carried on by men only, but in recent years women in hunting attire are gaining wealth by it.

Snake in Church Pew.

Sunday worshipers at the Catholic church, in Hallock, N. D., were frightened on finding a big snake in one of the pews. The reptile, known as a "razorback," was 57 inches in length and 2 inches through the thickest part of its body.

It was first seen by several women. One fainted, and men came to her assistance. They placed the reptile in a tub and it was killed.

Raises Seedless Prunes.

After seven years of experimenting a seedless prune has been produced by Carl Dietsch, a fruit grower, near Kalama, Wash. He has a tree that bore a bushel and a half of the new fruit, which ripened well. This prune contains a pellet about as large as a grain of wheat. The fruit is about three-fourths of an inch in diameter and two inches long. It is of excellent flavor.

Marries Girl His Father Lashed.

Declaring that he wanted to make reparation for his father's cruelty in whipping the girl, Vogt O. Dozier, son of W. S. Dozier, clerk of the superior court, at Dawson, Ga., has married Essie Carter.

Dozier and Miss Carter had been in love for some time. Dozier's father tried to separate them, but failed. The girl was dragged from her home in Dawson, stripped, and whipped unmercifully. She came near dying from the beating.

Recently Miss Carter brought suit in the United States court for $25,000 damages against the elder Dozier, who is wealthy. Both Dozier and his wife say the suit will be pressed.

Pennsylvania Woman Mother of Fifteen in Twelve Years.

Six children born in a little over thirteen months is the remarkable record of Mrs. Stephen Nagcotte, of Frenchtown, Pa. She has had fifteen children in twelve years, and thirteen of them are living.

September 10, 1911, she became the mother of triplets—two girls and a boy—and three sturdy boys arrived just thirteen months and twenty days after the other trio. The mother is an American and the father of French descent.

Escapes Death Though Engine Runs Over Her.

Thrown directly in front of the engine of a Rock Island train, which had struck a buggy in which she was riding with her mother, a three-year-old girl escaped death. The mother was severely injured.

The woman had attempted to drive over a crossing between Formoso, Kan., and Esbon. The engine hit the buggy, wrecking it and throwing the occupants out. The mother was tossed to one side, and the engine and tender passed over the child, who was found under the front coach, uninjured. She was prostrate on a tie, with both feet against one rail, having escaped by a few inches.

Wants Woman in Cabinet.

Mrs. Clark Shortridge Foltz, attorney and leading suffragist of California, has sent to President-elect Woodrow Wilson the following telegram:

"Accept my congratulations. In making up your cabinet, please consider the women of the ten suffrage States. As a member of your cabinet, a wise, scholarly woman would bring to your council great assistance for the universal good of the people."

Urge Protection for Birds.

Destruction of certain birds costs the United States in food destruction millions of dollars each year, according to the committee on wild life protection of the National Conservation Congress, which has announced its intention of seeking national protection for insect-eating birds. The destruction of fruits and grains by insects each year is estimated at from one hundred and fifty million to one-half billion. Farmers and fruit growers will be urged to consider the damage to agriculture by insect pests which could be avoided by the protection of bird life.

Likewise, those in the cities will be confronted with the contribution to the "high cost of living" by the destruction of crops.

Three measures provided for the protection of certain birds are pending before Congress, and those the committee intends to press at the coming session. Among the birds which should be protected for the good they do in keeping down the insect plagues, according to the committee, are all songbirds, swallows, woodpeckers, blackbirds, quails, doves, and nighthawks.

Cotton Crop Breaks Record.

Experts declare that the cotton crop which has just been picked in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas is the greatest ever grown in those States. The yield in Texas is particularly large.

The cotton crop of 1911-12 in Texas was 4,327,000 bales; in Oklahoma, 1,036,000; in Arkansas, 941,000; in Louisiana, 403,000; in Missouri, about 100,000. Both Oklahoma and Arkansas, it is estimated, will produce a million bales each this year, while Texas is expected to exceed her last year's crop by half a million bales.

Texas alone grows more than one-fourth of the entire cotton crop of the South, which for 1911-12 was 16,138,426 bales, the cotton alone having a money value of $810,280,764, while the cotton, cottonseed, and by-products together were worth $937,710,073.

Postal Bank Popular.

Postmaster General Hitchcock announced recently that approximately $28,000,000 had been deposited to date in postal-savings bank depositories by 290,000 individuals, aggregating $96 per depositor.

The system now is operated in 12,773 post offices, and 7,357 banks have qualified to receive postal-savings funds.

To Extend Galveston Sea Wall.

On account of the rapid growth and commercial development of the city, Galveston, Texas, is laying plans for an extension of her famous sea wall. This extension of the wall with accompanying grade raising will entail a cost of at least $5,000,000, and will provide raised area and sea-wall protection for practically double the present population of the city.

The present sea wall of Galveston, on which work was started in 1902 and finished in about four years, extends from the city limits on the east, around the gulf front of the city a distance of four and one-half miles, built at a cost of $2,000,000.

Queer Loot Collected by Minneapolis Thief.

Loot, the variety of which is said to be the most peculiar in the history of the Minneapolis police department, has been recovered by the police from the residence of Stanley Wartkess, who was arrested. The goods range from a polliwog in alcohol to a Bible, and from artificial flowers to ether.

President-elect Wilson Felt "Mascot" Would Help Him Win.

Governor Wilson's one superstition was involved in the election. On his journeys over the country it was noticed that he frequently carried a big, smooth horse chestnut in his hand.

"That's my only superstition," he explained. "I always have one of these in

my trousers pocket. I feel that I will have luck if I have a horse chestnut with me."

A Trenton admirer kept the governor supplied with horse chestnuts during the campaign. Several times Governor Wilson lost his "mascot," but he always got another and put it in his pocket.

No Minister, Only the Talking Machine at this Funeral.

No minister officiated at the funeral of Daniel E. Caswell, who had been noted for years for his many eccentricities. A number of friends and neighbors of the dead man gathered to hear the unique service, which consisted of his favorite selection on the talking machine.

6,363,000 Farms in United States.

There are approximately 6,363,000 farms in the United States, according to Professor John Lee Coulter, chief statistician of the United States bureau of census, who testified in the government's suit to dissolve the alleged Harvester Trust. Coulter was called on the final day of the Chicago hearing to supply figures on the farm acreage of the country and the machinery necessary to cultivate the farms.

$5,000,000,000 Yield of Nation's Farms for 1912.

A corn crop of 3,169,137,000 bushels, or 281,921,000 bushels more than the greatest crop of corn ever grown in any country of the world, is the feature of the country's most remarkable agricultural year in history, according to the crop report of the United States department of agriculture. The report completed the government's preliminary estimates of the nation's principal farm crops. This great crop of corn was worth to farmers $1,850,776,000.

The enormous sum of $4,171,134,000 represented the farm value of the United States crops of corn, hay, wheat, oats, potatoes, barley, flaxseed, rye, and buckwheat. With the value of the growing cotton crop and the crops of tobacco, rice, and apples, the aggregate value of these principal farm products will mount well beyond $5,000,000,000.

Upon the preliminary estimates of production announced, the value of the crops figure out as follows:

Corn, $1,850,776,000; hay, $854,615,000; wheat, $603,639,000; oats, $476,169,000; potatoes, $188,501,000; barley, $120,845,000; flaxseed, $39,693,000; rye, $24,370,000; buckwheat, $12,526,000.

There was an increase in the total value of each of these crops, excepting buckwheat, potatoes, barley, and rye.

The increase netted $515,057,000 over the value of last year's crops.

In Pennsylvania, the yield of corn per acre was 42.1 bushels, the total production being 61,003,000 bushels; of potatoes, 106 bushels per acre, total 28,090,000 bushels; tobacco, 1,450 pounds per acre, total, 64,090,000 pounds.

Details of the report follow:

Corn—Total production, preliminarily estimated, 3,169,137,000 bushels, compared with 2,531,488,000 bushels last year and the record crop of 2,927,416,000 bushels in 1906. Yield per acre, 21.3 bushels, compared with 23.9 bushels last year and 26.7 bushels, the ten-year average. Average farm price, 58.4 cents per bushel, compared with 64.7 cents last year. Quality, 101.1 per cent, compared with the ten-year average. Corn of 1911 crop remaining on farms November 1 was 64,764,000 bushels, compared with 123,824,000 bushels of the 1910 crop remaining on farms November 1 last year. The farm value of the corn crop December 1, last year, was $1,565,258,000.

Tobacco—Total production, preliminarily estimated, 959,437,000 pounds, compared with 905,109,000 pounds last year and the record crop of 1,103,415,000 pounds in 1910. Yield per acre, 803.4 pounds, compared with 893.7 pounds last year and 852.2 pounds, the ten-year average. Quality, 100.5 per cent of the ten-year average.

Wheat—Total production, preliminarily estimated, 720,333,000 bushels, compared with 621,338,000 bushels last year and the record crop of 748,460,000 bushels in 1901. Yield per acre, 16.0 bushels, compared with 12.5 bushels last year and 14.0 bushels, the ten-year average. Average farm price, 83.8 cents per bushel, compared with 91.5 cents last year. Weight per measured bushel, 58.3 pounds, compared with 57.8 pounds last year and 57.7 pounds, the ten-year average. The farm value of the wheat crop on December 1 last year was $543,063,000.

Oats—Total production, preliminarily estimated, 1,417,172,000 bushels, compared with 922,298,000 bushels last year and the record crop of 1,186,341,000 bushels in 1910. Yield per acre, 37.4 bushels, compared with 24.4 bushels last year and 29.5 bushels, the ten-year average. Average farm price, 33.6 cents per bushel, compared with 43.8 cents last year. Weight per measured bushel, 33 pounds, compared with 31.1 pounds last year and 31.3 pounds, the ten-year average. The farm value of the oats crop on December 1 last year was $414,663,000.

Scientist Adds $52,000,000 to Wisconsin's Reserve Wealth.

Wisconsin will add $52,000,000 to its reserve wealth as the result of experiments carried out in the mining laboratory of the University of Wisconsin on the merits of Wisconsin paint materials.

One million tons of rock containing these materials have for centuries been lying idle in the southwest portion of Wisconsin. A university professor has produced, from the same ore, paint of every hue and color from mahogany to colonial oak.

Sherman Was the Seventh Vice President to Die in Office.

James S. Sherman was the seventh vice president to die in office. Of the six previous deaths four occurred in November. The men were George Clinton, of New York, aged 73; Elbridge Gerry, of Massachusetts, aged 70; William R. King, of Alabama, aged 67; Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts, aged 63; Thomas A. Hendricks, of Indiana, aged 66, and Garrett A. Hobart, of New Jersey, aged 55.

Mr. King took the oath of office in Cuba, whither he had gone on account of ill health. He never presided over the Senate.

Messrs. Gerry and Wilson died in Washington, and Clinton and Gerry were buried in the congressional cemetery. King was buried in Dallas County, Alabama, Hendricks in Indianapolis, and Hobart in Paterson, N. J.

Only four vice presidents of the United States were elected to the presidency after serving in the second highest office. They were John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Martin van Buren, and Theodore Roosevelt. Five succeeded to the presidency through the death of the chief executive. These were John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Chester A. Arthur, and Colonel Roosevelt.

Vice presidents who were renominated or reelected were John Adams, vice president 1780 and 1792, and president, 1796; George Clinton, vice president 1804 and 1808; Daniel D. Tompkins, vice president 1816 and 1820; John C. Calhoun, vice president 1824 and 1828; R. M. Johnson, vice president 1836, renominated and defeated in 1840; Thomas A. Hendricks, nominated with Tilden in 1876, elected with Cleveland 1884.

Says Criminal Can't be Told by His Face.

Declaring that there is no general facial or physical characteristic, or even general mannerism, by which the criminal classes of the country, except the degenerates, can be detected, Major Richard Sylvester, superintendent of the metropolitan police, of Washington, D. C., in an address to the Anthropological Society said that the real criminals look the part of prosperous men and have none of that shrinking appearance so generally ascribed to them in the popular mind.

The speaker outlined the history of crime, saying that antiquity affords no well-defined record of it, and that homicide seems to have been the earliest form of crime. He said that no matter how minute the details which criminologists gather regarding the physical and mental differences between the normal man and the criminal, it is possible for time to make such changes in the appearance of either class that the original classification will not hold good when applied to practical police work.

Congested centers where the criminal classes congregate form an exception, he said. There it is easy to distinguish the industrious citizen from the mischief-maker.

Saves Employers $20,000 Yearly With Magnet and Bucket.

He doesn't look like a very important part of a big automobile factory organization, this stooped, grizzled man, but President G. W. Bennett, of the Willys-Overland Company, says that "Magnet Bill" saves his salary a dozen times over every day he works. Rain or shine, summer or winter, Magnet Bill may be seen walking slowly about the automobile plant, at Toledo, Ohio, his eyes almost constantly cast on the ground. Bill gets his nickname from the fact that his tools consist solely of one tin bucket and a big steel magnet, strapped to the end of a shovel handle. It is his duty to save automobile tires by removing from the roadway every nail and bit of iron, brass, or steel that might cause a puncture. Thousands of cars are run over the roadway to the testing place, and it is figured that without the precaution taken by Magnet Bill the cost for cut and punctured tires would be $20,000 every year.

Burglars Choke the Parrot.

Taking the precaution first to strangle a parrot, which the family regarded as a more certain safeguard than a watchdog, burglars entered the home of Thomas Stern, at Allentown, Pa., and stole a quantity of jewelry from the bedroom and a small sum of money. At daylight a policeman found the half-dazed parrot in the

streets, yelling "Maggie, Maggie!" as best it could. Members of the family declare that they heard the bird yell during the night, but when the cries stopped they thought that Polly had been dreaming.

First Salute to China's Flag.

When China's building site at the exposition grounds, at San Francisco, was dedicated recently by Commissioners Chin-tao-Chen and Chin-Chun Wang, a salute of twenty-one guns was fired by United States artillery just as the flag of the great young Asiatic republic was planted in the soil of the fair. It was a historic occasion if for no other reason than that it marked the first time the five-colored Chinese flag had received a national salute on American territory. China is the second foreign power to accept formally a building site for 1915.

100,000 in Clutches of Loan Sharks in New York.

Money lenders in New York do an annual business of $20,000,000. More than 100,000 persons, including 30,000 municipal employees, are in their clutches, and State courts are the unwitting instruments through which usury is collected, according to a report made public by investigators for District Attorney Whitman.

Other facts set forth in the report are that "loan sharks" have been responsible for a great many suicides, defalcations, and petty thieveries; that thousands of employees, private and city, have been made inefficient through mental distress, while scores of big business interests have discharged workers upon complaints of lenders—unfairly, the investigators think—instead of cooperating with their employees to eradicate the evil.

It is recommended that the city establish a civil bureau to defend victims against whom lenders bring civil action.

Tight Ring Delays Wedding.

When Miss Hattie Meyer, of Isanti County, Minn., one of the principals in a wedding before Judge Finehout, attempted to remove a ring from her finger so that it might be replaced by the groom, Ed Johnson, with one that would forever seal their mutual vows, she found the ring stubbornly resisted her efforts.

It was in vain she tried to draw it gently over her knuckle. Her sister volunteered her services, and the bridegroom came to the rescue, and between them the ring at last was released. The ceremony, which had been delayed, then went on.

To Spend Honeymoon in the Arctic.

A tall, chestnut-haired, blue-eyed girl, with a thousand-dollar chain of gold nuggets dangling over her well-tailored blue coat, arrived on the *California* at New York recently from the land of Robert Bruce. Helen Enequist MacPhee is on her way to a honeymoon along the arctic circle, where they have dog sledges instead of parlor cars, and all out-of-door spooning is done by the light of the aurora borealis.

Four years ago Miss MacPhee completed her probation as a nurse in the French Hospital, San Francisco. For her first case they brought in a young man with several ribs broken and other things the matter with him. His automobile had bucked.

The first time that Gordon Runyan's ribs stopped hurting for a few minutes he noticed the nurse. From that moment he wanted to get well solely because he wanted to get the nurse.

"I haven't got any money," he said, when he told her about it, "but I'll run up to Alaska and dig some. Wait a little while and I'll be back."

It was a long time before Runyan struck it rich. When he did he cleaned up $100,000. He sent Miss MacPhee the nugget necklace, and told her to come to Alaska. Just now she's returning from a visit to her parents in Scotland. The honeymoon will be spent on the shores of Bering Sea.

Widow Walks 312 Miles.

With her clothes in tatters and her shoes almost falling to pieces, Mrs. Marie Wright, 40 years old, of Peoria, Ill., appeared at the police station at East St. Louis recently, and told of having walked 312 miles from Memphis, Tenn., where she spent her last cent to bury her husband, William A. Wright.

She asked for temporary shelter and something to eat, but after hearing her story the police provided her with new shoes, better clothing, and money, and made arrangements for her transportation to Peoria, where her five children, the oldest of whom is only 16, are being cared for by friends.

Counting Electoral Vote a Formality.

Counting the electoral vote has usually been a "show" formality. Except in rare instances in the past, everybody has known the result of the election weeks before the electoral vote was gone over. The law has provided that the electors meet in their States on the second Monday in January, and designate their choice for president and vice president as directed by the votes of the people. Copies of the electoral vote in the State are then attested and sent to the secretary of state at Washington. Representatives of the electors also take duplicate copies to Washington. The day set by law for the counting of the vote is the second Wednesday in February. The galleries of the House of Representatives are always crowded by those eager to witness the ceremony. The Senate and House go into joint session, and the envelopes containing the certificates are then opened in the alphabetical order.

New York has the largest number of electoral votes, 45, and Pennsylvania is next, with 38. The vote of the other States is as follows:

Alabama, 12; Arizona, 3; Arkansas, 9; California, 13; Colorado, 6; Connecticut, 7; Delaware, 3; Florida, 6; Georgia, 14; Idaho, 4; Illinois, 29; Indiana, 15; Iowa, 13; Kansas, 10, Kentucky, 13; Louisiana, 10; Maine, 6; Maryland, 8; Massachusetts, 18; Michigan, 15; Minnesota, 12; Mississippi, 10; Missouri, 18; Montana, 4; Nebraska, 8; Nevada, 3; New Hampshire, 4; New Jersey, 14; New Mexico, 3; North Carolina, 12; North Dakota, 5; Ohio, 24; Oklahoma, 10; Oregon, 5; Rhode Island, 5; South Carolina, 5; Tennessee, 12; Texas, 20; Utah, 4; Vermont, 4; Virginia, 12; Washington, 7; West Virginia, 8; Wisconsin, 13; Wyoming, 3. A majority in the electoral college is 266 votes.

Thomas Ryan Retires.

Thomas Ryan, for several years advisory counsel to the secretary of the interior, and long in public life, resigned November 25th. He is seventy-five years old. He served as assistant secretary of the interior under Secretary Hitchcock, was a member of the House of Representatives from Kansas for eleven years, and once minister to Mexico. His home is at Muskogee, Okla.

Turn Political Meeting into a Dance.

The last political meeting at Littell, Wash., held on the eve of the election, was a failure. The fact that the politicians had rented a hall which a crowd of young folk wished to use for a dance explains why the meeting was not a success. The speakers had hardly had a chance to get started when a laughing throng of young people rushed into the hall. In the excitement the speaker's table was overturned.

"Cut out the politics! let's dance," shouted a youth, and as a fiddler ascended to the platform the politicians left—barring a few who evidently preferred dancing to politics.

Policemen Fight Death Duel by Mistake.

Each suspecting that the other was a dangerous criminal, a Jersey City policeman and a Hoboken policemen fought a duel at Hoboken, N. J., before daylight recently. The skull of one was fractured, and the other received four bullet wounds in the breast. At the hospital it was said both would die.

Both were unconscious when picked up after the fight. One of them had depended upon his nightstick, the other had used his revolver at close range. Stephen Costello was the Jersey City officer, and the Hoboken policeman was John Deitrich.

At Work on Large Painting.

Edwin H. Blashfield, who painted the dome piece for the Library of Congress, is working on one of the largest canvases ever painted in America, and it is claimed the figures on it overshadow any ever wrought in this country. The painting will constitute the dome piece for the new State capitol in Madison, Wis. Several of the figures measure fourteen and one-half feet as they float in the air. The canvas, when in place, will be 200 feet from the eye of a person standing in the rotunda.

To Stir Up London Police.

London, having been rudely brought out of the long-standing delusion that its morals are far superior to those of any large continental city, will soon begin stirring up its police. In a short time the white slave bill will undoubtedly pass, and it is hoped this will mark the beginning of a new era of purity.

Handel Booth, a member who is particularly interested in the bill, says special powers are not needed, but the police must be taught to use the powers they have.

"The root of the problem must be faced," he said, "and those who think that the new bill will make very much difference will soon find out they are mistaken. We English are too prone to blame all crimes on foreigners as if we were all angels ourselves.

"I don't want the police system to become demoralized here, like that of New York. I don't want the police turned into inspectors of moralities and made the custodians of the chastity of poor girls. I am against police protection of virtue. You cannot leave your responsibilities in this matter to the policeman on the beat."

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The Nick Carter Weekly

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When it comes to detective stories worth while, the NICK CARTER WEEKLY contains the only ones that should be considered. They are not overdrawn tales of bloodshed. They rather show the workings of one of the finest minds ever conceived by a writer.

The name of Nick Carter is familiar all over the world and the stories of his adventures are read eagerly by millions, in twenty different languages. No other stories have withstood the severe test of time so well as those contained in the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. It proves conclusively that they are best.

We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news-dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage-stamps.

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STREET & SMITH, PUBLISHERS, 79-89 SEVENTH AVE., NEW YORK CITY